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PLAYS, ACTING AND MUSIC

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PLAYS, ACTING AND MUSIC

A BOOK OF THEORY

by

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

★

THIS book is a Book of Theories. It deals mainly with music and with the various arts of the stage. The new material on Music and Musicians, which is included for the first time in this edition, begins with Sarasate, 1892 and ends in 1907, extending from page 71 to page 192. Life, too, is a form of art, and for that reason I indulge my curiosity by the study of people, apart from them as artists. I wish to be as little abstract as possible, and to study first principles, not so much as they exist in the brain of the theorist, but as they may be discovered, alive and in effective action, in every achieved form of art. I do not understand the limitation by which so many writers on æsthetics choose to confine themselves to the study of artistic principles as they are seen in this or that separate form of art. Each art has its own laws, its own limits; these it is the business of the critic jealously to distinguish. Yet in the study of art as art, it should be his endeavour to master the universal science of beauty.

September 1928.

*

After seeing a ballet, a farce, and the fragment of an opera performed by the marionettes at the Costanzi Theatre in Rome, I am inclined to ask myself why we require the intervention of any less perfect medium between the meaning of a piece, as the author conceived it, and that other meaning which it derives from our reception of it. The living actor, even when he condescends to subordinate himself to the requirements of pantomime, has always what he is proud to call his temperament; in other words, so much personal caprice, which for the most part means wilful misunderstanding; and in seeing his acting you have to consider this intrusive little personality of his as well as the author's. The marionette may be relied upon. He will respond to an indication without reserve or revolt; an error on his part (we are all human) will certainly be the fault of the author; he can be trained to perfection. As he is painted, so will he smile; as the wires lift or lower his hands, so will his gestures be; and he will dance when his legs are set in motion.

Seen at a distance, the puppets cease to be an amusing piece of mechanism, imitating real people; there is no difference. I protest that the Knight who came in with his plumed hat, his shining sword, and flung back his long cloak with

so fine a sweep of the arm, was exactly the same to me as if he had been a living actor, dressed in the same clothes, and imitating the gesture of a knight; and that the contrast of what was real, as we say, under the fiction appears to me less ironical in the former than in the latter. We have to allow, you will admit, at least as much to the beneficent heightening of travesty, if we have ever seen the living actor in the morning, not yet shaved, standing at the bar, his hat on one side, his mouth spreading in that abandonment to laughter which has become from the necessity of his profession, a natural trick; oh, much more, I think, than if we merely come upon an always decorative, never an obtrusive, costumed figure, leaning against the wall, nonchalantly enough, in a corner of the coulisses.

To sharpen our sense of what is illusive in the illusion of the puppets, let us sit not too far from the stage. Choosing our place carefully, we shall have the satisfaction of always seeing the wires at their work, while I think we shall lose nothing of what is most savoury in the feast of the illusion. There is not indeed the appeal to the senses of the first row of the stalls at a ballet of living dancers. But is not that a trifle too obvious sentiment for the true artist in artificial things? Why leave the ball-room? It is not nature that one looks for on

the stage in this kind of spectacle, and our excitement in watching it should remain purely intellectual. If you prefer that other kind of illusion, go a little further away, and, I assure you, you will find it quite easy to fall in love with a marionette. I have seen the most adorable heads, with real hair too, among the wooden dancers of a theatre of puppets; faces which might easily, with but a little of that good-will which goes to all falling in love, seem the answer to a particular dream, making all other faces in the world but spoilt copies of this inspired piece of painted wood.

But the illusion, to a more scrupulous taste, will consist simply in that complication of view which allows us to see wood and wire imitating an imitation, and which delights us less when seen at what is called the proper distance, where the two are indistinguishable, than when seen from just the point where all that is crudely mechanical hides the comedy of what is, absolutely, a deception. Losing, as we do, something of the particularity of these painted faces, we are able to enjoy all the better what it is certainly important we should appreciate, if we are truly to appreciate our puppets. This is nothing less than a fantastic, yet a direct, return to the masks of the Greeks: that learned artifice by which tragedy and comedy were

assisted in speaking to the world with the universal voice, by this deliberate generalizing of emotion. It will be a lesson to some of our modern notions; and it may be instructive for us to consider that we could not give a play of Ibsen's to marionettes, but that we could give them the *Agamemnon*.

Above all, for we need it above all, let the marionettes remind us that the art of the theatre should be beautiful first, and then indeed what you will afterwards. Gesture on the stage is the equivalent of rhythm in verse, and it can convey, as a perfect rhythm should, not a little of the inner meaning of words, a meaning perhaps more latent in things. Does not gesture indeed make emotion, more certainly and more immediately than emotion makes gesture? You may feel that you may suppress emotion; but assume a smile, lifted eyebrows, a clenched fist, and it is impossible for you not to assume along with the gesture, if but for a moment, the emotion to which that gesture corresponds. In our marionettes, then, we get personified gesture, and the gesture, like all other forms of emotion, generalized. The appeal in what seems to you these childish manœuvres is to a finer, because to a more intimately poetic, sense of things than the merely rationalistic appeal of very modern plays. If at times we laugh, it is with wonder at seeing humanity so gay, heroic, and

untiring. There is the romantic suggestion of magic in this beauty.

Maeterlinck wrote on the title-page of one of his volumes *Drames pour marionettes*, no doubt to intimate his sense of the symbolic value, in the interpretation of a profound inner meaning of that external nullity which the marionette by its very nature emphasizes. And so I find my puppets, where the extremes meet, ready to interpret not only the *Agamemnon*, but *La Mort de Tintagiles*; for the soul, which is to make, we may suppose, the drama of the future, is content with as simple a mouthpiece as Fate and the great passions, which were the classic drama.

PLAYS, ACTING, AND DRAMA

*

I HAVE been reading Nietzsche on the Origin of Tragedy with the delight of one who discovers a new world, which he has seen already in a dream. I never take up Nietzsche without the surprise of finding something familiar. Sometimes it is the answer to a question which I have only asked; sometimes it seems to me that I have guessed at the answer. And, in his restless energy, his hallucinatory vision, the agility of this climbing mind of the mountains, I find that invigoration which only a 'tragic philosopher' can give. 'A sort of mystic soul,' as he says of himself, 'almost the soul of a Mænad, who, troubled, capricious, and half irresolute whether to cede or fly, stammers out something in a foreign tongue.'

The book is a study in the origin of tragedy among the Greeks, as it arose out of music through the medium of the chorus. We are apt to look on the chorus in Greek plays as almost a negligible part of the structure; as, in fact, hardly more than the comments of that 'ideal spectator' whom Schlegel called up out of the depths of the German consciousness. We know, however, that the chorus was the original nucleus of the play, that the action on which it seems only to comment is no more than a development of the chorus. Here is the problem to which Nietzsche endeavours to

find an answer. He finds it, unlike the learned persons who study Greek texts, among the roots of things, in the very making of the universe. Art arises, he tells us, from the conflict of the two creative spirits, symbolized by the Greeks in the two gods, Apollo and Dionysus; and he names the one the Apollonian spirit, which we see in plastic art, and the other the Dionysiac spirit, which we see in music. Apollo is the god of dreams, Dionysus the god of intoxication; the one represents for us the world of appearances, the other is, as it were, the voice of things in themselves. The chorus, then, which arose out of the hymns to Dionysus, is the 'lyric cry,' the vital ecstasy; the drama is the projection into vision, into a picture, of the exterior, temporary world of forms. 'We now see that the stage and the action are conceived only as vision: that the sole "reality" is precisely the chorus, which itself produces the vision, and expresses it by the aid of the whole symbolism of dance, sound and word.' In the admirable phrase of Schiller, the chorus is 'a living rampart against reality,' against that false reality of daily life which is a mere drapery of civilization, and has nothing to do with the primitive reality of nature. The realistic drama begins with Euripides; and Euripides, the casuist, the friend of Socrates (whom Nietzsche qualifies as the true decadent, an

'instrument of decomposition,' the slayer of art, the father of modern science), brings tragedy to an end, as he substitutes pathos for action, thought for contemplation, and passionate sentiments for the primitive ecstasy. 'Armed with the scourge of its syllogisms, an optimist dialectic drives the music out of tragedy: that is to say, destroys the very essence of tragedy, an essence which can be interpreted only as a manifestation and objectivation of Dionysiac states, as a visible symbol of music, as the dream-world of a Dionysiac intoxication.'

There are many pages, scattered throughout his work, in which Pater has dealt with some of the Greek problems very much in the spirit of Nietzsche; with that problem, for instance, of the 'blitheness and serenity' of the Greek spirit, and of the gulf of horror over which it seems to rest, suspended as on the wings of the condor. That myth of Dionysus Zagreus, 'a Bacchus who had been in hell,' which is the foundation of the marvellous new myth of *Denys l'Auxerrois* seems always to be in the mind of Nietzsche, though indeed he refers to it but once, and passingly. Pater has shown, as Nietzsche shows in greater detail and with a more rigorous logic, that this 'serenity' was but an accepted illusion, and all Olympus itself but 'intermediary,' an escape,

through the æsthetics of religion, from the trouble at the heart of things; art, with its tragic illusions of life, being another form of escape. To Nietzsche the world and existence justify themselves only as an æsthetic phenomenon, the work of a god wholly the artist; 'and in this sense the object of the tragic myth is precisely to convince us that even the horrible and the monstrous are no more than an æsthetic game played with itself by the Will in the eternal plenitude of its joy.' 'The Will' is Schopenhauer's 'Will,' the vital principle. 'If it were possible,' says Nietzsche, in one of his astonishing figures of speech, 'to imagine a dissonance becoming a human being (and what is man but that?), in order to endure life, this dissonance would need some admirable illusion to hide from itself its true nature, under a veil of beauty.' This is the aim of art, as it calls up pictures of the visible world and of the little temporary actions of men on its surface. The hoofed satyr of Dionysus, as he leaps into the midst of these gracious appearances, drunk with the young wine of nature, surly with the old wisdom of Silenus, brings the real, excessive, disturbing truth of things suddenly into the illusion; and is gone again, with a shrill laugh, without forcing on us more of his presence than we can bear.

I have but touched on a few points in an argu-

ment which has itself the ecstatic quality of which it speaks. A good deal of the book is concerned with the latest development of music, and especially with Wagner. Nietzsche, after his change of sides, tells us not to take this part too seriously: 'what I fancied I heard in the Wagnerian music has nothing to do with Wagner.' Few better things have been said about music than these pages; some of them might be quoted against the 'programme' music which has been written since that time, and against the false theory on which musicians have attempted to harness music in the shafts of literature. The whole book is awakening; in Nietzsche's own words, 'a prodigious hope speaks in it.'

COQUELIN AND MOLIÈRE: SOME ASPECTS

*

To see Coquelin in Molière is to see the greatest of comic actors at his best, and to realize that here is not a temperament, or a student, or anything apart from the art of the actor. His art may be compared with that of Sarah Bernhardt for its infinite care in the training of nature. They have an equal perfection, but it may be said that Coquelin, with his ripe, mellow art, his passion of humour, his touching vehemence, makes himself seem less a divine machine, more a delightfully faulty person. His voice is firm, sonorous, flexible, a human, expressive, amusing voice, not the elaborate musical instrument of Sarah, which seems to go by itself, câline, cooling, lamenting, raging, or in that wonderful swift chatter which she uses with such instant and deliberate effect. And, unlike her, his face is the face of his part, always a disguise, never a revelation.

I have been seeing the three Coquelins and their company at the Garrick Theatre. They did *Tartuffe*, *L'Avare*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, and a condensed version of *Le Dépit Amoureux*, in which the four acts of the original were cut down into two. Of these five plays only two are in verse, *Tartuffe* and *Le Dépit Amoureux*, and I could not help wishing that the

fashion of Molière's day had allowed him to write all his plays in prose. Molière was not a poet, and he knew that he was not a poet. When he ventured to write the most Shakespearean of his comedies, *L'Avare*, in prose, 'le même préjugé,' Voltaire tells us, 'qui avait fait tomber "le Festin de Pierre," parce qu'il était en prose, nuisit au succès de *l'Avare*. Cependant le public qui, à la longue, se rend toujours au bon, finit par donner à cet ouvrage les applaudissements qu'il mérite. On comprit alors qu'il peut y avoir de fort bonnes comédies en prose.' How infinitely finer, as prose, is the prose of *L'Avare* than the verse of *Tartuffe* as verse! In *Tartuffe* all the art of the actor is required to carry you over the artificial jangle of the alexandrines without allowing you to perceive too clearly that this man, who is certainly not speaking poetry, is speaking in rhyme. Molière was a great prose-writer, but I do not remember a line of poetry in the whole of his work in verse. The temper of his mind was the temper of mind of the prose-writer. His worldly wisdom, his active philosophy, the very mainspring of his plots, are found, characteristically, in his valets and his servantmaids. He satirizes the miser, the hypocrite, the bas-bleu, but he chuckles over Frosine and Gros-René; he loves them for their freedom of speech and their elastic minds, ready in words

or deeds. They are his chorus, if the chorus might be imagined as directing the action.

But Molière has a weakness, too, for the bourgeois, and he has made M. Jourdain immortally delightful. There is not a really cruel touch in the whole character; we laugh at him so freely because Molière lets us laugh with such kindness. M. Jourdain has a robust joy in life; he carries off his absurdities by the simple good faith which he puts into them. When I speak of M. Jourdain I hardly know whether I am speaking of the character of Molière or of the character of Coquelin. Probably there is no difference. We get Molière's vast, succulent farce of the intellect rendered with an art like his own. If this, in every detail, is not what Molière meant, then so much the worse for Molière.

Molière is kind to his bourgeois, envelops him softly in satire as in cotton-wool, dandles him like a great baby; and Coquelin is without bitterness, stoops to make stupidity heroic, a distinguished stupidity. A study in comedy so profound, so convincing, so full of human nature and of the art-concealing art of the stage, has not been seen in our time. As Mascarille, in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, Coquelin becomes delicate and extravagant, a scented whirlwind; his parody is more splendid than the thing itself which he parodies,

more full of fine show and nimble bravery. There is beauty in this broadly comic acting, the beauty of subtle detail. Words can do little to define a performance which is a constant series of little movements of the face, little intonations of the voice, a way of lolling in the chair, a way of speaking, of singing, of preserving the gravity of burlesque. In *Tartuffe* we get a form of comedy which is almost tragic, the horribly serious comedy of the hypocrite. Coquelin, who remakes his face, as by a prolonged effort of the muscles, for every part, makes, for this part, a great fish's face, heavy, suppressed, with lowered eyelids and a secret mouth, out of which steals at times some stealthy avowal. He has the movements of a great slug, or of a snail, if you will, putting out its head and drawing it back into its shell. The face waits and plots, with a sleepy immobility, covering a hard, indomitable will. It is like a drawing of Daumier, if you can imagine a drawing which renews itself at every instant, in a series of poses to which it is hardly necessary to add words.

I am told that Coquelin, in the creation of a part, makes his way slowly, surely, inwards, for the first few weeks of his performance, and that then the thing is finished, to the least intonation or gesture, and can be laid down and taken up at

will, without a shade of difference in the interpretation. The part of Maître Jacques in *L'Avare*, for instance, which I have just seen him perform with such gusto and such certainty, had not been acted by him for twenty years, and it was done, without rehearsal, in the midst of a company that required prompting at every moment. I suppose this method of moulding a part, as if in wet clay, and then allowing it to take hard, final form, is the method natural to the comedian, his right method. I can hardly think that the tragic actor should ever allow himself to become so much at home with his material; that he dare ever allow his clay to become quite hard. He has to deal with the continually shifting stuff of the soul and of the passions, with nature at its least generalized moments. The comic actor deals with nature for the most part generalized, with things palpably absurd, with characteristics that strike the intelligence, not with emotions that touch the heart or the senses. He comes to more definite and to more definable results, on which he may rest, confident that what has made an audience laugh once will make it laugh always, laughter being a physiological thing, wholly independent of mood.

In thinking of some excellent comic actors of our own, I am struck by the much greater effort which they seem to make in order to drive their

points home, and in order to get what they think variety. Sir Charles Wyndham is the only English actor I can think of at the moment who does not make unnecessary grimaces, who does not insist on acting when the difficult thing is not to act. In *Tartuffe* Coquelin stands motionless for five minutes at a time, without change of expression, and yet nothing can be more expressive than his face at those moments. In Chopin's *G Minor Nocturne*, *Op.* 15, there is an F held for three bars, and when Rubinstein played the Nocturne, says Mr. Huneker in his instructive and delightful book on Chopin, he prolonged the tone, 'by some miraculous means,' so that 'it swelled and diminished, and went singing into D, as if the instrument were an organ.' It is that power of sustaining an expression, unchanged, and yet always full of living significance, that I find in Coquelin. It is a part of his economy, the economy of the artist. The improviser disdains economy, as much as the artist cherishes it. Coquelin has some half-dozen complete variations of the face he has composed for *Tartuffe*; no more than that, with no insignificances of expression thrown away; but each variation is a new point of view, from which we see the whole character.

*

1. *The Marrying of Ann Leete*

It was for the production of such plays as Mr. Granville Barker's that the Stage Society was founded, and it is doing good service to the drama in producing them. *The Marrying of Ann Leete* is the cleverest and most promising new play that I have seen for a long time; but it cannot be said to have succeeded even with the Stage Society audience, and no ordinary theatrical manager is very likely to produce it. The author, it is true, is an actor, but he is young; his play is immature, too crowded with people, too knotted up with motives, too inconclusive in effect. He knows the stage, and his knowledge has enabled him to use the stage for his own purposes, inventing a kind of technique of his own, doing one or two things which have never, or never so deftly, been done before. But he is something besides all that; he can think, he can write, and he can suggest real men and women. The play opens in the dark, and remains for some time brilliantly ambiguous. People, late eighteenth-century people, talk with bewildering abruptness, not less bewildering point; they, their motives, their characters, swim slowly into daylight. Some of the dialogue is, as the writer says of politics, 'a game for clever children, women, and fools'; it is a game demanding

close attention. A courtly indolence, an intellectual blackguardism, is in the air; people walk, as it seems, aimlessly in and out, and the game goes on; it fills one with excitement, the excitement of following a trail. It is a trail of ideas, these people think, and they act because they have thought. They know the words they use, they use them with deliberation, their hearts are in their words. Their actions, indeed, are disconcerting; but these people, and their disconcerting actions, are interesting, holding one's mind in suspense.

Mr. Granville Barker has tried to tell the whole history of a family, and he interests us in every member of that family. He plays them like chessmen, and their moves excite us as chess excites the mind. They express ideas; the writer has thought out their place in the scheme of things, and he has put his own faculty of thinking into their heads. They talk for effect, or rather for disguise; it is part of their keen sense of the game. They talk at cross-purposes, as they wander in and out of the garden terrace; they plan out their lives, and life comes and surprises them by the way. Then they speak straight out of their hearts, sometimes crudely, sometimes with a naïveté which seems laughable; and they act on sudden impulses, accepting the consequences when they come. They live an artificial life, knowing lies to be lies,

and choosing them; they are civilized, they try to do their duty by society; only, at every moment, some ugly gap opens in the earth, right in their path, and they have to stop, consider, choose a new direction. They seem to go their own way, almost without guiding; and indeed may have escaped almost literally out of their author's hands. The last scene is an admirable episode, a new thing on the stage, full of truth within its own limits; but it is an episode, not a conclusion, much less a solution. Mr. Barker can write: he writes in short, sharp sentences, which go off like pistol-shots, and he keeps up the firing, from every corner of the stage. He brings his people on and off with an unconventionality which comes of knowing the resources of the theatre, and of being unfettered by the traditions of its technique. The scene with the gardener in the second act has extraordinary technical merit, and it has the art which conceals its art. There are other inventions in the play, not all quite so convincing. Sometimes Mr. Barker, in doing the right or the clever thing, does it just not quite strongly enough to carry it against opposition. The opposition is the firm and narrow mind of the British playgoer. Such plays as Mr. Barker's are apt to annoy without crushing. The artist, who is yet an imperfect artist, bewilders the world with what is novel in his art; the great

artist convinces the world. Mr. Barker is young: he will come to think with more depth and less tumult; he will come to work with less prodigality and more mastery of means. But he has energy already, and a sense of what is absurd and honest in the spectacle of this game, in which the pawns seem to move themselves.

2. *The Lady from the Sea*

On seeing the Stage Society's performance of Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea,* I found myself wondering whether Ibsen is always so unerring in his stagecraft as one is inclined to assume, and whether there are not things in his plays which exist more satisfactorily, are easier to believe in, in the book than on the stage. Does not the play, for instance, lose a little in its acceptance of those narrow limits of the footlights? That is the question which I was asking myself as I saw the performance of the Stage Society. The play is, according to the phrase, a problem-play, but the problem is the problem of all Ibsen's plays: the desire of life, the attraction of life, the mystery of life. Only, we see the eternal question under a new, strange aspect. The sea calls to the blood of this woman who has married into an inland home; and the sea-cry, which is the desire of more abundant life, of unlimited freedom, of an un-

known ecstasy, takes form in a vague Stranger, who has talked to her of the sea-birds in a voice like their own, and whose eyes seem to her to have the green changes of the sea. It is an admirable symbol, but when a bearded gentleman with a knapsack on his back climbs over the garden wall and says: 'I have come for you; are you coming?' and then tells the woman that he has read of her marriage in the newspaper, it seemed as if the symbol had lost a good deal of its meaning in the gross act of taking flesh. The play haunts one, as it is, but it would have haunted one with a more subtle witchcraft if the Stranger had never appeared upon the stage. Just as Wagner insisted upon a crawling and howling dragon, a Fafner with a name of his own and a considerable presence, so Ibsen brings the supernatural or the subconscious a little crudely into the midst of his persons of the drama. To use symbol, and not to use it in the surprising and inevitable way of the poet, is to fall into the dry, impotent sin of allegory.

3. *The New Idol*

It was an interesting experiment on the part of the Stage Society to give a translation of *La Nouvelle Idole*, one of those pieces by which M. François de Curel has reached that very actual section of the French public which is interested in

ideas. *The New Idol* is a modern play of the most characteristically modern type; its subject-matter is largely medical, it deals with the treatment of cancer; we are shown a doctor's laboratory, with a horrible elongated diagram of the inside of the human body; a young girl's lungs are sounded in the doctor's drawing-room; nearly every character talks science and very little but science. When they cease talking science, which they talk well, with earnestness and with knowledge, and try to talk love or intrigue, they talk badly, as if they were talking of things which they knew nothing about. Now, personally, this kind of talk does not interest me; it makes me feel uncomfortable. But I am ready to admit that it is justified if I find that the dramatic movement of the play requires it, that it is itself an essential part of the action. In *The New Idol* I think this is partly the case. The other medical play which has lately been disturbing Paris, *Les Avariés*, does not seem to me to fulfil this condition at any moment: it is a pamphlet from beginning to end, it is not a satisfactory pamphlet, and it has no other excuse for existence. But M. de Curel has woven his problem into at least a semblance of action; the play is not a mere discussion of irresistible physical laws; the will enters into the problem, and will fights against will, and against not quite irresistible physical

laws. The suggestion of love interests, which come to nothing, and have no real bearing on the main situation, seems to me a mistake; it complicates things, things which must appear to us so very real if we are to accept them at all, with rather a theatrical kind of complication. M. de Curel is more a thinker than a dramatist, as he has shown lately in the very original, interesting, impossible *Fille Sauvage*. He grapples with serious matters seriously, and he argues well, with a closely woven structure of arguments; some of them bringing a kind of hard and naked poetry out of mere closeness of thinking and closeness of seeing. In *The New Idol* there is some dialogue, natural give-and-take, about the fear of death and the horror of indestructibility (a variation on one of the finest of Coventry Patmore's odes) which seemed to me admirable: it held the audience because it was direct speech, expressing a universal human feeling in the light of a vivid individual crisis. But such writing as this was rare; for the most part it was the problem itself which insisted on occupying our attention, or, distinct from this, the too theatrical characters.

4. *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

The Stage Society has shown the courage of its opinions by giving an unlicensed play, *Mrs. War-*

ren's Profession, one of the 'unpleasant plays' of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, at the theatre of the New Lyric Club. It was well acted, with the exception of two of the characters, and the part of Mrs. Warren was played by Miss Fanny Brough, one of the cleverest actresses on the English stage, with remarkable ability. The action was a little cramped by the smallness of the stage, but, for all that, the play was seen under quite fair conditions, conditions under which it could be judged as an acting play and as a work of art. It is brilliantly clever, with a close, detective cleverness, all made up of merciless logic and unanswerable common sense. The principal characters are well drawn, the scenes are constructed with a great deal of theatrical skill, the dialogue is telling, the interest is held throughout. To say that the characters, without exception, are ugly in their vice and ugly in their virtue; that they all have, men and women, something of the cad in them; that their language is the language of vulgar persons, is, perhaps, only to say that Mr. Shaw has chosen, for artistic reasons, to represent such people just as they are. But there is something more to be said. *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is not a representation of life; it is a discussion about life. Now, discussion on the stage may be interesting. Why not? Discussion is the most interesting thing in the world, off

the stage; it is the only thing that makes an hour pass vividly in society; but when discussion ends art has not begun. It is interesting to see a sculptor handling bits of clay, sticking them on here, scraping them off there; but that is only the interest of a process. When he has finished I will consider whether his figure is well or ill done; until he has finished I can have no opinion about it. It is the same thing with discussion on the stage. The subject of Mr. Shaw's discussion is what is called a 'nasty' one. That is neither here nor there, though it may be pointed out that there is no essential difference between the problem that he discusses and the problem that is at the root of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

But Mr. Shaw, I believe, is never without his polemical intentions, and I should like, for a moment, to ask whether his discussion of his problem, taken on its own merits, is altogether the best way to discuss things. Mr. Shaw has an ideal of life: he asks that men and women should be perfectly reasonable, that they should clear their minds of cant, and speak out everything that is in their minds. He asks for cold and clear logic, and when he talks about right and wrong he is really talking about right and wrong logic. Now, logic is not the mainspring of every action, nor is justice only the inevitable working out of an

equation. Humanity, as Mr. Shaw sees it, moves like clockwork; and must be regulated as a watch is, and praised or blamed simply in proportion to its exactitude in keeping time. Humanity, as Mr. Shaw knows, does not move by clockwork, and the ultimate justice will have to take count of more exceptions and irregularities than Mr. Shaw takes count of. There is a great living writer who has brought to bear on human problems as consistent a logic as Mr. Shaw's, together with something which Mr. Shaw disdains. Mr. Shaw's logic is sterile, because it is without sense of touch, sense of sight, or sense of hearing; once set going it is warranted to go straight, and to go through every obstacle. Tolstoi's logic is fruitful, because it allows for human weakness, because it understands, and because to understand is, among other things, to pardon. In a word, the difference between the spirit of Tolstoi and the spirit of Mr. Shaw is the difference between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Euclid.

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In his earlier plays Maeterlinck invented a world of his own, which was a sort of projection into space of the world of nursery legends and of childish romances. It was at once very abstract and very local. There was a castle by the sea, a 'well at the world's end,' a pool in a forest; princesses with names out of the *Morte d'Arthur*, lost crowns of gold; and blind beggars without a name wandered in the darkness of eternal terror. Death was always the scene-shifter of the play, and destiny the stage-manager. The people who came and went had the blind gestures of marionettes, and one pitied their helplessness. Pity and terror had indeed gone to the making of this drama, in a sense much more literal than Aristotle's.

In all these plays there were few words and many silences, and the words were ambiguous, hesitating, often repeated, like the words of peasants or children. They were rarely beautiful in themselves, rarely even significant, but they suggested a singular kind of beauty and significance, through their adjustment in a pattern or arabesque. Atmosphere, the suggestion of what was not said, was everything; and in an essay in *Le Trésor des Humbles* Maeterlinck told us that in drama, as he conceived it, it was only the words that were not said which mattered.

Gradually the words began to mean more in the scheme of the play. With *Aglavaine et Sélysette* we got a drama of the inner life, in which there was little action, little effective dramatic speech, but in which people thought about action and talked about action, and discussed the morality of things and their meaning, very beautifully.

Monna Vanna is a development out of *Aglavaine et Sélysette*, and in it for the first time Maeterlinck has represented the conflicts of the inner life in an external form, making drama, while the people who undergo them discuss them frankly at the moment of their happening.

In a significant passage of *La Sagesse et la Destinée*, Maeterlinck says: *On nous affirme que toutes les grandes tragédies ne nous offrent pas d'autre spectacle que la lutte de l'homme contre la fatalité. Je crois, au contraire, qu'il n'existe pas une seule tragédie où la fatalité règne réellement. J'ai beau les parcourir, je n'en trouve pas une où le héros combatte le destin pur et simple. Au fond, ce n'est jamais le destin, c'est toujours la sagesse, qu'il attaque.*' And, on the preceding page, he says: '*Observons que les poètes tragiques osent très rarement permettre au sage de paraître un moment sur la scène. Ils craignent une âme haute parce que les événements la craignent.*' Now it is this conception of life and

of drama that we find in *Monna Vanna*. We see the conflict of wisdom, personified in the old man Marco and in the instinctively wise Giovanna, with the tragic folly personified in the husband Guido, who rebels against truth and against life, and loses even that which he would sacrifice the world to keep. The play is full of lessons in life, and its deepest lesson is a warning against the too ready acceptance of this or that aspect of truth or of morality. Here is a play in which almost every character is noble, in which treachery becomes a virtue, a lie becomes more vital than truth, and only what we are accustomed to call virtue shows itself mean, petty, and even criminal. And it is most like life, as life really is, in this: that at any moment the whole course of the action might be changed, the position of every character altered, or even reversed, by a mere decision of the will, open to each, and that things happen as they do because it is impossible, in the nature of each, that the choice could be otherwise. Character, in the deepest sense, makes the action, and there is something in the movement of the play which resembles the grave and reasonable march of a play of Sophocles, in which men and women deliberate wisely and not only passionately, in which it is not only the cry of the heart and of the senses which takes the form of drama.

In Maeterlinck's earlier plays, in *Les Aveugles*, *Intérieur*, and even *Pelléas et Mélisande*, he is dramatic after a new, experimental fashion of his own; *Monna Vanna* is dramatic in the obvious sense of the word. The action moves, and moves always in an interesting, even in a telling, way. But at the same time I cannot but feel that something has been lost. The speeches, which were once so short as to be enigmatical, are now too long, too explanatory; they are sometimes rhetorical, and have more logic than life. The playwright has gained experience, the thinker has gained wisdom, but the curious artist has lost some of his magic. No doubt the wizard had drawn his circle too small, but now he has stepped outside his circle into a world which no longer obeys his formulas. In casting away his formulas, has he the big human mastery which alone could replace them? *Monna Vanna* is a remarkable and beautiful play, but it is not a masterpiece. *La Mort de Tintagiles* was a masterpiece of a tiny, too deliberate kind; but it did something which no one had ever done before. We must still, though we have seen *Monna Vanna*, wait, feeling that Maeterlinck has not given us all that he is capable of giving us.

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Modern staging, which has been carried in England to its highest point of excellence, professes to aim at beauty, and is, indeed, often beautiful in detail. But its real aim is not at the creation of beautiful pictures, in subordination to the words and actions of the play, but at supplementing words and actions by an exact imitation of real surroundings. Imitation, not creation, is its end, and in its attempt to imitate the general aspect of things it leads the way to the substitution of things themselves for perfectly satisfactory indications of them. 'Real water' we have all heard of, and we know its place in the theatre; but this is only the simplest form of this anti-artistic endeavour to be real. Sir Henry Irving will use, for a piece of decoration meant to be seen only from a distance, a garland of imitation flowers, exceedingly well done, costing perhaps two pounds, where two or three brushes of paint would have supplied its place more effectively. When d'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini* was put on the stage in Rome, a pot of basil was brought daily from Naples in order that it might be laid on the window-sill of the room in which Francesca and Paolo read of Lancelot and Guinevere. In an interview published in one of the English papers, d'Annunzio declared that he had all his stage

decorations made in precious metal by fine craftsmen, and that he had done this for an artistic purpose, and not only for the beauty of the things themselves. The gesture, he said, of the actor who lifts to his lips a cup of finely-wrought gold will be finer, more sincere, than that of the actor who uses a gilded 'property.'

If so, I can but answer, the actor is no actor, but an amateur. The true actor walks in a world as real in its unreality as that which surrounds the poet or the enthusiast. The bare boards, chairs, and T-light, in the midst of which he rehearses, are as significantly palaces or meadows to him, while he speaks his lines and lives himself into his character, as all the real grass and real woodwork with which the manager will cumber the stage on the first night. As little will he need to distinguish between the gilt and the gold cup as between the imaginary characters who surround him, and his mere friends and acquaintances who are speaking for them.

This costly and inartistic aim at reality, then, is the vice of the modern stage, and, at its best or worst, can it be said that it is really even what it pretends to be: a perfectly deceptive imitation of the real thing? I said once, to clinch an argument against it, by giving it its full possible credit, that the modern staging can give you the hour of

the day and the corner of the country with precise accuracy. But can it? Has the most gradual of stage-moons ever caught the miraculous lunar trick to the life? Has the real hedgerow ever brought a breath of the country upon the stage? I do not think so, and meanwhile, we have been trying our hardest to persuade ourselves that it is so, instead of abandoning ourselves to a new, strange atmosphere, to the magic of the play itself.

What Mr. Craig does is to provide a plain, conventional, or darkened background for life, as life works out its own ordered lines on the stage; he gives us suggestion instead of reality, a symbol instead of an imitation; and he relies, for his effects, on a new system of lighting from above, not from below, and on a quite new kind of drill, as I may call it, by which he uses his characters as masses and patterns, teaching them to move all together, with identical gestures. The eye is carried right through or beyond these horizons of canvas, and the imagination with it; instead of stopping entangled among real stalks and painted gables.

I have seen nothing so imaginative, so restful, so expressive, on the English stage as these simple and elaborately woven designs, in patterns of light and drapery and movement, which in *The*

Masque of Love had a new quality of charm, a completeness of invention, for which I would have given all d'Annunzio's golden cups and Mr. Tree's boats on real Thames water.

Here, for once, we see the stage treated in the proper spirit, as material for art, not as a collection of real objects, or the imitation of real objects. Why should not the visible world be treated in the same spirit as the invisible world of character and temperament? A fine play is not the copy of an incident or the stenography of a character. A poetical play, to limit myself to that, requires to be put on the stage in such a way as to suggest that atmosphere which, if it is a true poem, will envelop its mental outlines. That atmosphere, which is of its essence, is the first thing to be lost, in the staging of most poetical plays. It is precisely what the stage-manager, if he happens to have the secret of his own art, will endeavour most persistently to suggest. He will make it his business to compete with the poet, and not, after the manner of Drury Lane, with the accidents of life and the vulgarities of nature.

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If you look into the actors' prompt-books, the most frequent direction which you will find is this: 'Cross stage to right.' It is not a mere direction, it is a formula; it is not a formula only, but a universal remedy. Whenever the action seems to flag, or the dialogue to become weak or wordy, you must 'cross stage to right'; no matter what is wrong with the play, this will set it right. We have heard so much of the 'action' of a play, that the stage-manager in England seems to imagine that dramatic action is literally a movement of people across the stage, even if for no other reason than for movement's sake. Is the play weak? He tries to strengthen it, poor thing, by sending it out walking for its health.

If we take drama with any seriousness, as an art as well as an improvisation, we shall realize that one of its main requirements is that it should make pictures. That is the lesson of Bayreuth and when one comes away, the impression which remains, almost longer than the impression of the music itself, is that grave, regulated motion of the actors. As I have said elsewhere, no actor makes a gesture which has not been regulated for him; there is none of that unintelligent haphazard known as being 'natural'; these people move like music, or with that sense of motion which it is the

business of painting to arrest. But here, of course, I am speaking of the poetic drama, of drama which does not aim at the realistic representation of modern life. Maeterlinck should be acted in this solemn way, in a kind of convention; but I admit that you cannot act Ibsen in quite the same way.

The other day, when Mme. Jeanne Granier's company came over here to give us some lessons in acting, I watched a little scene in *La Veine*, which was one of the telling scenes of the play: Guitry and Brasseur standing face to face for some minutes, looking at their watches, and then waiting, each with a single, fixed expression on his face, in which the whole temperament of each is summed up. One is inclined to say: No English actor could have done it. Perhaps; but then, no English stage-manager would have let them do it. They would have been told to move, to find 'business,' to indulge in gesture which would not come naturally to them. Again, in *Tartuffe*, when at the end, the hypocrite is exposed and led off to prison, Coquelin simply turns his back on the audience, and stands, with head sullenly down, making no movement; then, at the end, he turns half-round and walks straight off, on the nearer side of the stage, giving you no more than a momentary glimpse of a convulsed face, fixed into

a definite, gross, raging mood. It would have taken Mr. Tree five minutes to get off the stage, and he would have walked to and fro with a very multiplication of gesture, trying on one face, so to speak, after another. Would it have been so effective, that is to say, so real?

A great part of the art of French acting consists in knowing when and how not to do things. Their blood helps them, for there is movement in their blood, and they have something to restrain. But they have realized the art there is in being quite still, in speaking naturally, as people do when they are really talking, in fixing attention on the words they are saying and not on their antics while saying them. The other day, in the first act of *The Bishop's Move* at the Garrick, there is a Duchess talking to a young novice in the refectory of a French abbey. After standing talking to him for a few minutes, with only such movements as would be quite natural under the circumstances, she takes his arm, not once only but twice, and walks him up and down in front of the footlights, for no reason in the world except to 'cross stage to right.' The stage trick was so obvious that it deprived the scene at once of any pretence to reality.

The fact is, that we do not sufficiently realize the difference between what is dramatic and what

is merely theatrical. Drama is made to be acted, and the finest 'literary' play in the world, if it wholly fails to interest people on the stage, will have wholly failed in its first and most essential aim. But the finer part of drama is implicit in the words and in the development of the play, and not in its separate small details of literal 'action.' Two people should be able to sit quietly in a room, without ever leaving their chairs, and to hold our attention breathless for as long as the playwright likes. Given a good play, French actors are able to do that. Given a good play, English actors are not allowed to do it.

Is it not partly the energy, the restless energy, of the English character which prevents our actors from ever sitting or standing still on the stage? We are a nation of travellers, of sailors, of business people; and all these have to keep for ever moving. Our dances are the most vigorous and athletic of dances, they carry us all over the stage, with all kinds of leaping and kicking movements. Our music-hall performers have invented a kind of clowning peculiar to this country, in which kicking and leaping are also a part of the business. Our melodramas are constructed on more movable planes, with more formidable collapses and collisions, than those of any other country. Is not, then, the persistent English

habit of 'crossing stage to right' a national characteristic, ingrained in us, and not only a matter of training? It is this reflection which hinders me from hoping, with much confidence, that a reform in stage-management will lead to a really quieter and simpler way of acting. But might not the experiment be tried? Might not some stage-manager come forward and say: 'For heaven's sake stand still, my dear ladies and gentlemen, and see if you cannot interest your audience without moving more than twice the length of your own feet?'

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Was there ever at any time an art, an acquired method, of speaking verse, as definite as the art and method of singing it? The Greeks, it has often been thought, had such a method, but we are still puzzling in vain over their choruses, and wondering how far they were sung, how far they were spoken. Wagner pointed out the probability that these choruses were written to fixed tunes, perhaps themselves the accompaniment to dances, because it can hardly be believed that poems of so meditative a kind could have themselves given rise to such elaborate and not apparently expressive rhythms. In later times there have been stage traditions, probably developed from the practice of some particular actor, many conflicting traditions; but, at the present day, there is not even a definite bad method, but mere chaos, individual caprice, in the speaking of verse as a foolish monotonous tune or as a foolishly contorted species of prose.

An attempt has lately been made by Mr. Yeats, with the practical assistance of Mr. Dolmetsch and Miss Florence Farr, to revive or invent an art of speaking verse to a pitch sounded by a musical instrument. Mr. Dolmetsch has made instruments which he calls psalteries, and Miss Farr has herself learnt and has taught others,

to chant verse, in a manner between speaking and singing, to the accompaniment of the psaltery. Mr. Yeats has written and talked and lectured on the subject; and the experiment has been tried in the performances of Mr. Gilbert Murray's translation of the *Hippolytus* of Euripides. Here, then, is the only definite attempt which has been made in our time to regulate the speech of actors in their speaking of verse. No problem of the theatre is more important, for it is only by the quality of the verse, and by the clearness, beauty, and expressiveness of its rendering, that a play of Shakespeare is to be distinguished, when we see it on the stage, from any other melodrama. 'I see no reason,' says Lamb, in the profoundest essay which has ever been written on the acting of drama, 'to think that if the play of *Hamlet* were written over again by some such writer as Banks or Lillo, retaining the process of the story, but totally omitting all the poetry of it, all the divine features of Shakespeare, his stupendous intellect; and only taking care to give us enough of passionate dialogue, which Banks or Lillo were never at a loss to furnish; I see not how the effect could be much different upon an audience, nor how the actor has it in his power to represent Shakespeare to us differently from his representation of Banks or Lillo.' It is precisely by his speaking of that

poetry, which one is accustomed to hear hurried over or turned into mere oratory, that the actor might, if he were conscious of the necessity of doing it, and properly trained to do it, bring before the audience what is essential in Shakespeare. Here, in the rendering of words, is the actor's first duty to his author, if he is to remember that a play is acted, not for the exhibition of the actor, but for the realization of the play. We should think little of the 'dramatic effect' of a symphony, in which every individual note had not been given its precise value by every instrument in the orchestra. When do we ever, on the stage, see the slightest attempt, on the part of even the 'solo' players, to give its precise value to every word of that poetry which is itself a not less elaborate piece of concerted music?

The two great dangers in the speaking of verse are the danger of over-emphasizing the meaning and the danger of over-emphasizing the sound. I was never more conscious of the former danger than when I heard a lecture given in London by M. Silvain, of the Comédie Francaise, on the art of speaking on the stage.

The method of M. Silvain (who, besides being an actor, is Professor of Declamation at the Conservatoire) is the method of the elocutionist, but

of the elocutionist at his best. He has a large, round, vibrating voice, over which he has perfect command. 'M. Silvain,' says M. Catulle Mendès, '*est de ceux, bien rares au Théâtre Français, qu'on entend même lorsqu'ils parlent bas.*' He has trained his voice to do everything that he wants it to do; his whole body is full of life, energy, sensitiveness to the emotion of every word; his gestures seem to be at once spontaneous and calculated. He adores verse, for its own sake, as a brilliant executant adores his violin; he has an excellent contempt for prose, as an inferior form. In all his renderings of verse, he never forgot that it was at the same time speech, the direct expression of character, and also poetry, a thing with its own reasons for existence. He gave La Fontaine in one way, Molière in another, Victor Hugo in another, some poor modern verse in yet another. But in all there was the same attempt: to treat verse in the spirit of rhetoric, that is to say, to over-emphasize it consistently and for effect. In a tirade from Corneille's *Cinna*, he followed the angry reasoning of the lines by counting on his fingers: one, two, three, as if he were underlining the important words of each clause. The danger of this method is that it is apt to turn poetry into a kind of bad logic. There, precisely, is the danger of the French conception of poetry, and

M. Silvain's method brings out the worst faults of that conception.

Now in speaking verse to musical notes, as Mr. Yeats would have us do, we are at least safe from this danger. Mr. Yeats, being a poet, knows that verse is first of all song. In purely lyrical verse, with which he is at present chiefly concerned, the verse itself has a melody which demands expression by the voice, not only when it is 'set to music,' but when it is said aloud. Every poet, when he reads his own verse, reads it with certain inflections of the voice, in what is often called a 'sing-song' way, quite different from the way in which he would read prose. Most poets aim rather at giving the musical effect, and the atmosphere, the vocal atmosphere, of the poem, than at emphasizing individual meanings. They give, in the musician's sense, a 'reading' of the poem, an interpretation of the poem as a composition. Mr. Yeats thinks that this kind of reading can be stereotyped, so to speak, the pitch noted down in musical notes, and reproduced with the help of a simple stringed instrument. By way of proof, Miss Farr repeated one of Mr. Yeats' lyrics, as nearly as possible in the way in which Mr. Yeats himself is accustomed to say it. She took the pitch from certain notes which she had written down, and which she struck on Mr.

Dolmetsch's psaltery. Now Miss Farr has a beautiful voice, and a genuine feeling for the beauty of verse. She said the lines better than most people would have said them, but, to be quite frank, did she say them so as to produce the effect Mr. Yeats himself produces whenever he repeats those lines? The difference was fundamental. The one was a spontaneous thing, profoundly felt; the other, a deliberate imitation in which the fixing of the notes made any personal interpretation, good or bad, impossible.

I admit that the way in which most actors speak verse is so deplorable that there is much to be said for a purely mechanical method, even if it should turn actors into little more than human phonographs. Many actors treat verse as a slightly more stilted kind of prose, and their main aim in saying it is to conceal from the audience the fact that it is not prose. They think of nothing but what they take to be the expression, and when they come to a passage of purely lyric quality they give it as if it were a quotation, having nothing to do with the rest of the speech. Anything is better than this haphazard way of misdoing things, either M. Silvain's oratory or the intoning into which Mr. Yeats' method would almost certainly drift. But I cannot feel that it is possible to do much good by a ready-made method

of any kind. Let the actor be taught how to breathe, how to articulate, let his voice be trained to express what he wants to express, and then let him be made to feel something of what verse means by being verse. Let him, by all means, study one of Mr. Yeats' readings, interpreted to him by means of notes; it will teach him to unlearn something and to learn something more. But then let him forget his notes and Mr. Yeats' method, if he is to make verse live on the stage.

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Life and beauty are the body and soul of great drama. Mix the two as you will, so long as both are there, resolved into a single substance. But let there be, in the making, two ingredients, and while one is poetry, and comes bringing beauty, the other is a violent thing which has been scornfully called melodrama, and is the emphasis of action. The greatest plays are melodrama by their skeleton, and poetry by the flesh which clothes that skeleton.

The foundation of drama is that part of the action which can be represented in dumb show. Only the essential parts of action can be represented without words, and you would set the puppets vainly to work on any material but that which is common to humanity. The permanence of a drama might be tested by the continuance and universality of its appeal when played silently in gestures. I have seen the test applied. Companies of marionette players still go about the villages of Kent, and among their stock pieces is *Arden of Feversham*, the play which Shakespeare is not too great to have written, at some moment when his right hand knew not what his left hand was doing. Well, that great little play can hold the eyes of every child and villager, as the puppets enact it; and its power has not gone out of it after

three centuries. Dumb show apes the primal forces of nature, and is inarticulate, as they are; until relief gives words. When words come, there is no reason why they should not be in verse, for only in verse can we render what is deepest in humanity of the utmost beauty. Nothing but beauty should exist on the stage. Visible beauty comes with the ballet, an abstract thing; gesture adds pantomime, with which drama begins; and then words bring in the speech by which life tries to tell its secret. Because poetry, speaking its natural language of verse, can let out more of that secret than prose, the great drama of the past has been mainly drama in verse. The modern desire to escape from form, and to get at a raw thing which shall seem like what we know of the outside of nature, has led our latest dramatists to use prose in preference to verse, which indeed is more within their limits. It is Ibsen who has seemed to do most to justify the use of prose, for he carries his psychology far with it. Yet it remains prose, a meaner method, a limiting restraint, and his drama a thing less fundamental than the drama of the poets. Only one modern writer has brought something which is almost the equivalent of poetry out of prose speech: Tolstoi, in *The Powers of Darkness*. The play is horrible and uncouth, but it is illuminated by a great inner

light. There is not a beautiful word in it, but it is filled with beauty. And that is because Tolstoi has the vision which may be equally that of the poet and of the prophet.

It is often said that the age of poetry is over, and that the great forms of the future must be in prose. That is the 'exquisite reason' of those whom the gods have not made poetical. It is like saying that there will be no more music, or that love is out of date. Forms change, but not essence; and Whitman points the way, not to prose, but to a poetry which shall take in wider regions of the mind.

Yet, though it is by its poetry that, as Lamb pointed out, a play of Shakespeare differs from a play of Banks or Lillo, the poetry is not more essential to its making than the living substance, the melodrama. Poets who have written plays for reading have wasted their best opportunities. Why wear chains for dancing? The limitations necessary to the drama before it can be fitted to the stage are but hindrances and disabilities to the writer of a book. Where can we find more spilt wealth than in the plays of Swinburne, where all the magnificent speech builds up no structure, but wavers in orchestral floods, without beginning or ending? It has been said that Shakespeare will sacrifice his drama to his poetry, and even *Hamlet*

has been quoted against him. But let *Hamlet* be rightly acted, and whatever has seemed mere lingering meditation will be recognized as a part of that thought which makes or waits on action. If poetry in Shakespeare may sometimes seem to delay action, it does but deepen it. The poetry is the life blood, or runs through it. Only bad actors and managers think that by stripping the flesh from the skeleton they can show us a more living body. The outlines of *Hamlet* are crude, irresistible melodrama, still irresistible to the gallery; and the greatness of the play, though it comes to us by means of the poetry, comes to us legitimately, as a growth out of melodrama.

The failure, the comparative failure, of every contemporary dramatist, however far he may go in one direction or another, comes from his neglect of one or another of these two primary and essential requirements. There is, at this time, a more serious dramatic movement in Germany than in any other country; with mechanicians, like Sudermann, as accomplished as the best of ours, and dramatists who are also poets, like Hauptmann. I do not know them well enough to bring them into my argument, but I can see that in Germany, whatever the actual result, the endeavour is in the right direction. Elsewhere, how often do we find even so much as this, in

more than a single writer here and there? Consider Ibsen, who is the subtlest master of the stage since Sophocles. At his best he has a firm hold on structural melodrama, he is a marvellous analyst of life, he is the most ingenious of all the playwrights; but ask him for beauty and he will give you a phrase, 'vine-leaves in the hair' or its equivalent; one of the clichés of the minor poet. In the end beauty revenged itself upon him by bringing him to a no-man's land where there were clouds and phantasms that he could no longer direct.

Maeterlinck began by a marvellous instinct, which plays 'for marionettes,' and, having discovered a forgotten secret, grew tired of limiting himself within its narrow circle, and came outside his magic. *Monna Vanna* is an attempt to be broadly human on the part of a man whose gift is of another kind: a visionary of the moods. His later speech, like his later dramatic material, is diluted; he becomes, in the conventional sense, eloquent, which poetry never is. But he has brought back mystery to the stage, which has been banished, or retained in exile, among phantasmagoric Faust-lights. The dramatist of the future will have more to learn from Maeterlinck than from any other playwright of our time. He has seen his puppets against the permanent darkness,

which we had cloaked with light; he has given them supreme silences.

In d'Annunzio we have an art partly shaped by Maeterlinck, in which all is atmosphere, and a home for sensations which never become vital passions. The roses in the sarcophagus are part of the action in *Francesca*, and in *The Dead City* the whole action arises out of the glorious mischief hidden like a deadly fume in the grave of Agamemnon. Speech and drama are there, clothing but not revealing one another; the speech always a lovely veil, never a human outline.

We have in England one man, and one only, who has some public claim to be named with these artists, though his aim is the negation of art. Mr. Shaw is a mind without a body, a whimsical intelligence without a soul. He is one of those tragic buffoons who play with eternal things, not only for the amusement of the crowd, but because an uneasy devil capers in their own brains. He is a merry preacher, a petulant critic, a great talker. It is partly because he is an Irishman that he has transplanted the art of talking to the soil of the stage: Sheridan, Wilde, Shaw, our only modern comedians, all Irishmen, all talkers. It is by his astonishing skill of saying everything that comes into his head, with a spirit really intoxicating, that Mr. Shaw has succeeded in holding

the stage with undramatic plays, in which there is neither life nor beauty. Life gives up its wisdom only to reverence, and beauty is jealous of neglected altars. But those who amuse the world, no matter by what means, have their place in the world at any given moment. Mr. Shaw is a clock striking the hour.

With Mr. Shaw we come to the play which is prose, and nothing but prose. The form is familiar among us, though it is cultivated with a more instinctive skill, as is natural, in France. There was a time, not so long ago, when Dumas fils was to France what Ibsen afterwards became to Europe. What remains of him now is hardly more than his first 'fond adventure' the supremely playable *Dame aux Camélias*. The other plays are already out of date, since Ibsen; the philosophy of *Tue-là!*' was the special pleading of the moment, and a drama in which special pleading, and not the fundamental 'criticism of life,' is the dramatic motive can never outlast its technique, which has also died with the coming of Ibsen. Better technique, perhaps, than that of *La Femme de Claude*, but with less rather than more weight of thought behind it, is to be found in many accomplished playwrights, who are doing all sorts of interesting temporary things, excellently made to entertain the attentive French public with a solid kind of

entertainment. Here, in England, we have no such folk to command; our cleverest playwrights, apart from Mr. Shaw, are what we might call practitioners. There is Mr. Pinero, Mr. Jones, Mr. Grundy; what names are better known, or less to be associated with literature? There is Anthony Hope, who can write, and Mr. Barrie who has something both human and humorous. There are many more names, if I could remember them; but where is the serious playwright? Who is there that can be compared with our poets or our novelists, not only with a Swinburne or a Meredith, but, in a younger generation, with a Bridges or a Conrad? The Court Theatre has given us one or two good realistic plays, the best being Mr. Granville Barker's, besides giving Mr. Shaw his chance in England, after he had had and taken it in America. But is there, anywhere but in Ireland, an attempt to write imaginative literature in the form of drama? The Irish Literary Theatre has already, in Mr. Yeats and Mr. Synge, two notable writers, each wholly individual, one a poet in verse, the other a poet in prose. Neither has yet reached the public, in any effectual way, or perhaps the limits of his own powers as a dramatist. Yet who else is there for us to hope in, if we are to have once more an art of the stage, based on the great prin-

ciples, and a theatre in which that art can be acted?

The whole universe lies open to the poet who is also a dramatist, affording him an incomparable choice of subject. Ibsen, the greatest of the playwrights of modern life, narrowed his stage, for ingenious plausible reasons of his own, to the four walls of a house, and, at his best, constrained his people to talk of nothing above their daily occupations. He got the illusion of everyday life, but at a cruel expense. These people, until they began to turn crazy, had no vision beyond their eyesight, and their thoughts never went deep enough to need a better form for expression than they could find in their newspapers. They discussed immortal problems as they would have discussed the entries in their ledger. Think for a moment how the peasants speak in that play of Tolstoi's which I have called the only modern play in prose which contains poetry. They speak as Russians speak, with a certain childishness, in which they are more primitive than our more civilized peasants. But the speech comes from deeper than they are aware, it stumbles into a revelation of the soul. A drunken man in Tolstoi has more wisdom in his cups than all Ibsen's strange ladies who fumble at their lips for sea-magic.

And as Tolstoi found in this sordid chaos material for tragedy which is as noble as the Greeks' (a like horror at the root of both, a like radiance at both summits), so the poet will find stories, as modern as this if he chooses, from which he can take the same ingredients for his art. The ingredients are unchanging since *Prometheus*; no human agony has ever grown old or lost its pity and terror. The great plays of the past were made out of great stories, and the great stories are repeated in our days and can be heard wherever an old man tells us a little of what has come to him in living. Verse lends itself to the lifting and adequate treatment of the primary emotions, because it can render them more as they are in the soul, not being tied down to probable words, as prose talk is. The probable words of prose talk can only render a part of what goes on among the obscure imageries of the inner life; for who, in a moment of crisis, responds to circumstances or destiny with an adequate answer? Poetry, which is spoken thought, or the speech of something deeper than thought, may let loose some part of that answer which would justify the soul, if it did not lie dumb upon its lips.

MUSIC

★

The playing of Ysaye is a great mystery; it is the mystery of the flesh, in which beauty is almost sinful. Other violinists are grave, chaste, or passionate; but his is the voice of the unappeasable agony of the senses. What Swinburne once wrote, he plays; his whole art is the art of Swinburne, as Kreisler's, by comparison, is the art of Browning. Kreisler is greater, but Ysaye fascinates. You see the music in the great black figure, that sways like a python; in the eyes that blink, and seem about to shed luxurious tears; the face like an actor's mask, enigmatic, quivering with emotion, listening to the sounds as they float up, a mask moulded into the shape of sound. The lips suck up music voluptuously: so the faun played on his pipe in the forests, when the wine of Bacchus had maddened him to a soft ecstasy. The tones are drops of magic dew, they are like wind and water, never like fire; they are pleasure, not joy; the soul is not in them, but a luxury which becomes divine because it was an ecstasy, even if a carnal ecstasy. A marvellous passage of double-stopping in one of the cadenzas in Beethoven was played as if one's teeth met in a peach. Other sounds seem to hurt the player as he draws them daintily, deliberately out of their silence, crying out in them. He floats on the surface of a river of pure sound,

and dreams; every note drops like water. He hears sound with all his nerves, and sets it to quiver like a thing tortured for pleasure. Always the dream is there, unholy, a rapture, a fascination: the playing of Ysaye, a thing perfect, faultless, invincible, in technique, moves us for none of these things finally, but because there is in it a great mystery.

Ysaye's strange originality is not less evident in his technique than in his whole conception and treatment of music. It seems to be based on no tradition, to have found itself out for itself, to be something rarer and in a way vaguer than that of any other violinist, and as if the tone which he creates had some unfamiliar birth. His bowing has its own particular magic of method, and the method has no doubt come by this time to be unconscious. Others have done as he does, and begun to play inaudibly with the orchestra, before his time comes to enter and be heard, but no one has the same veiled delicate way of ending a phrase, or indeed scarcely of ending, but of letting the sound go imperceptibly out. He sucks its full ripeness out of every tone, not startling but entrancing the hearing, which he soothes as with a wizard's fingers. His technique, unclassical, romantic, though finished to perfection, is part of his unconscious revelation of himself. He does not play twice quite alike; he can be careless, forget

what he is playing, be checked or quickened by a mood, a circumstance, a nothing; he adds to his power of mastery the surprise of an occasional divergence of it into some happy accident, and with immense dexterity conceals his art with his art.

The soul of Ysaye is lodged in the very pores of his body; he sweats music. Any ascetic thing is outside him; so that, while he can play Beethoven, he cannot play Bach. The sonata for violin and piano, which he played at the beginning of his first recital at Queen's Hall, was given dryly, with labour; the music, with its accompaniment on the piano, the modern instrument sounding so irrelevant, nowhere blending with the strings, became suddenly uninteresting, and all the magic had gone out of the violin. How can the body render the soul, when the soul is as bodiless as the sublime soul of Bach? All the limitations of this great, inspired player were seen in this rendering; in his incapacity to grapple with and master a force so alien from his own, in his indifference to music when it was merely noble and abstract.

Is it partly that Ysaye is fundamentally romantic, fundamentally unclassical? His technique follows no tradition, as Kreisler's does; Joachim could never have meant anything to him; whoever was his master, he has learnt little from anyone

but himself. And so it is that his playing is never twice the same; but depends on the mood of the moment as well as on the mood of the music. Even Saint-Saëns, whose music is made for him, is not always to his liking; and at his last concert he played the whole of the third concerto, up to the last movement, without interest, without beauty, as he had played the sonata of César Franck, carelessly indifferently, sometimes playing flat. Then, when the fire and sugar came in, though he missed the full crackle of that Spanish fire which only Sarasate, the Spaniard, can kindle, he gave us all the sugar of the really haunting melody which follows. That, he could not but abandon himself to; and the stealthy comfortable voice came back into the strings, and Ysaye had recaptured the music, and, with the music, himself.

At the concert where he played the Bach sonata Ysaye went on to the first violin concerto of Saint-Saëns, and the relief, indicated in the first leap of his bow on the strings, was like a re-awakening. Effective sound was there awaiting him, he caught it, glorified it, and the song-like part of it was as if a dream had been made audible. All the magic that he had taken from Bach he heaped upon Saint-Saëns, rendering with fierce delight this music so cunningly made for his instrument. Saint-Saëns is still the delight of the player, though

of his music one can only say that it survives, not that it lives. His is the skill that once seemed to mean something, beyond itself; now it is stripped bare, and shows you the mere material made for the executant. He is one of the great examples of those who are thought, at their time of day, to be 'classic.' That is the name generally given in their lifetime to the mediocre, effective talents, in whom no genius exists to be distracting. Wherever Saint-Saëns is cleverest, it is in some telling sweetness or poignancy, as here and there in the violin music and in *Samson et Dalila*. What once seemed, and may still seem to some, 'classical' is precisely the brilliant skill of writing which is content to make all its seeming novelties out of fixed and now lifeless forms. Another composer who is taking his place somewhat in the neighbourhood of Saint-Saëns in our concerts is César Franck, who, if he is more 'serious' and has done better things in other parts of his music, is no great musician. At the concert where Ysaye played his sonata, leaving it a tedious thing even in his playing, he played also, with great severity, a seventeenth-century chaconne for violin and organ, and was it something in the seriousness of this music, or only the rich charms in the intimate mingling of the two instruments, that brought back all his attention, and with it all his skill?

And then I asked myself whether after all this magician does not play the best music best, or whether his magic lies wholly in his bow. Bach, as I have said, he has not in his body, and he could not give it to the soul; but Beethoven, but Mozart, who are each in his way romantic, what is it that he takes from them, or adds to them, in this rare collaboration? A sound, a harmony, say a mere sound, exists in Beethoven or in Mozart, as it exists in no César Franck or Saint-Saëns, and it comes to them, as we say, of its own accord, whenever it is wanted. Ysaye listens for that sound in the depths of Beethoven and on the heights of Mozart; it comes to him living and naked, and he clothes it with silken garments, as if it were a woman.

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To hear Fritz Kreisler play the Chaconne, after hearing Jan Hambourg play it, is to realize all that music can gain or suffer at the hands of its interpreters. When he played the Chaconne it became articulate from the first touch of the bow on the strings. Every note lived, and with perfect ripeness; what had seemed a tedious musical exercise became a clear, various, positively engaging thing. But there is nothing that Kreisler plays quite so well as Beethoven, and the divine violin concerto has perhaps never been better played by anyone. How infinitely finer, more appropriate, as a form is a violin than a piano concerto! how faultlessly do instrument and instruments combine without any of the unnatural union of orchestra and piano! And this particular concerto is great even among Beethoven's works. It is, on his part, a revelation; and Kreisler played it as if Beethoven had revealed it privately, over again, to him. This young athlete, who seems joyously ready to grapple with sound, has a quality which of all others is best suited to interpret Beethoven. His soul seems to confide in his fiddle, and the fiddle tells us the secret. His fingers, trained to swift accuracy like race-horses, play from the heart, with checked passion; the notes throb, and their shriek is withdrawn from the strings, they cry with veiled lovely

voices. There is emotion in every note of the music, but emotion mastered by art, as Beethoven mastered it.

Kreisler's tone has in it a thrilling purity, and it can cry or warble like a bird: there are both cries and warblings in the first movement of the concerto. His playing has that energy which comes to flower in grace, with a supple concealed agility, a skill which is never allowed to tell for itself, to mean anything apart from what it expresses. As he attacks the music he has the air of an ardent young sculptor, at work with powerful and vitalizing hands. Sometimes his body sways under the music, yet is always stronger than any wave of emotion, which it overcomes gallantly. And his sense of proportion is so fine that any mere cadenza, played by him, becomes a link, not an interruption, so clearly and delicately is it put in its proper place, its due parenthesis.

No, there is no longer any room for doubt; after the farewell concert no one can doubt any longer that in Fritz Kreisler we have the greatest violinist now living. There was no reasonable doubt of it before, but such a performance as the rendering of Brahms' Concerto in D (Op. 77) at that concert was a thing so really overwhelming that it came to one, not so much by way of farewell, as, in another sense, a last word.

I had, one afternoon, to wait through the portentously long Fourth Symphony, or so it seemed to me, of Tschaikowsky. The conductor, Herr Mlynarski, did full justice to it, though the jerks of head and shoulders were a little too really significant of what was not always a lucid fever in the music. There was wild richness, lovely in the midst of menace, in these wholly Russian harmonies that tore at each other's throats like wolves on their native steppes. How exciting it is to hear Tschaikowsky, what an exotic kind of delight he gives you, much like that which I am finding in an anthology of Asiatic lovesongs, which the *Mercure de France* has published in the admirable French prose of M. Adolphe Thalasso. There, in those songs so unlike ours, so like what is fierce and primary in nature, you will find Afghans, among others, putting into a long, beating, verse that turns back upon itself in a refrain like beaten gongs, some living, almost terrible outcry, of the kind that might almost make us call one Muhammadji the Villon of Asia. There is something in Russian music like these desperate and passionate songs. Herr Mlynarski's own music, which Mischa Elman played, has indeed a lighter quality in it, especially in the *Musette*. Both these pieces, the other an *Adagio* from a concerto, he played in his serious, firm, masterly,

quite unboyish manner, with something at once rich and thrilling in his tone. The strings speak, when he sets them to reveal some beauty in music, with a perfect directness, a breadth, a gravity, which are mature already. He gives us exactly what is there, with the certainty of a master. And now, after hearing this, or any other violinist, Ysaye, Sarasate, Kubelik, the two or three people who stand out above all the others, how do we hear Kreisler? Kubelik dazzles us, and sets us to follow him with wonder. Sarasate stirs our blood, and fills our ears with a tone which might be either fire or water. Ysaye lulls us half asleep, that we may meet him halfway in a dream. But Kreisler is gloriously awake, and transports us, not higher than the earth, into a living glory of sound. What others can do, each in his own way, Kreisler can do as well or better; and he can do all that these others can do. He is without excess and without default; the perfection which he attains is that perfection of Giorgione's, beyond Titian's, because its level never falls below a certain divine height. And for that reason he will never intoxicate the multitude quite as completely as a magican like Paderewski. The enthusiasm at the farewell concert was the best kind of enthusiasm, but it did not go mad; no one wanted to throw flowers, or to shake hands with the player. In this kind of

perfection there is an awe which, having compelled admiration, keeps that admiration sane.

When Kreisler played the Mozart concerto it seemed as if there could be nothing more to hear. And the Mozart (was it by some sly malice of Mr. Wood?) was set to follow Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, so pretty, so ingenious, so nicely written, with its faint hint of programme music. How distressing it is to be so clever as Mendelssohn was, so capable a musician, so full of right ambition, and yet to lack precisely all that is essential for the making of great music! After Mendelssohn on the programme came Mozart, and seemed to be using material as light, as flowing; but it was the god's touch on it, not the mortal's. And Kreisler gave us all Mozart, not only that brightness and gaiety which everyone can give us, but the strength, the poignancy of beauty, the manly joy, which his bow creates for us at its first touch of the strings. The cadenza was fiery and faultless, a rapture not an exercise, and the abandonment to it was an assertion of mastery. When Kreisler plays, the music inspires him, he sways under it, as a strong tree sways tightly under a great wind. The music takes him for its voice, and becomes audible through him, yet it is he who has the power to master inspiration, to translate the divine message. His faultlessly faithful playing is

a creation, in which the music, passed on from hand to hand, escapes at last into freedom.

I expected, when the Mozart was over, no finer enchantment; finer, perhaps, I did not get, but a thing mightier, a deeper revelation came out of the Brahms concerto. In that concerto Brahms is content to push off his spectacles and to listen to the elemental voices. When Kreisler played it, it seemed greater than Mozart, not because it was greater, but because it spoke in a more modern voice and because the player could put more of himself and his art into it. Here was that romantic beauty which modern art has created out of stranger materials than the sufficient beauty of what may be called 'classical' art. The cadenza in Mozart seemed to give Kreisler all that he needed, but the first cadenza in Brahms had all Dionysus in it, with all Apollo. A great wave of sound, as swift and easy as a wave of the sea, seemed to have caught and carried one, resistlessly, into some new paradise.

Throughout this concerto Kreisler was himself and Brahms, almost more potently than I have heard him be at once Beethoven and himself. Is it a rare new fashion that is coming on, that one after another of the great violinists is delivering himself up to the music, not flourishing it in triumph at the tail of his chariot? The boy Mischa

Elman does without display, and Kreisler does without it. And where others make you think of their skill first, and then perhaps of the beauty of their renderings, both of these, and above all Kreisler, give you these things by the way, means to an end, but no end in themselves. Yet, what certainty, what variety of technique! The first movement of the Mozart was all crystal, the second gold and honey, the third a leaf blown by the wind. The Brahms was itself a great wind. And there was a little Piedmontese Rhapsody by a modern Italian, Leone Sinigaglia, which muttered and chattered, and had a homely leaping gaiety, as of music at play. Each came to us after its sort, living its individual life.

I know nothing of the origin of Kreisler; he cannot be wholly German, he is too alert; Austrian of some kind he must be, I suppose; but when I once heard him play the warm, showy, and effective music of Max Bruch, with the Hungarian cadences of the concerto leaping and stinging in the true gipsy manner, I could almost fancy some gipsy strain in the player. For all his profound gravity, his breadth, his immense restraint, there is something which boils underneath, and is part of the motive power; and there are moments when I am reminded by some queer undercurrent, in his miraculous playing, of some thrilling and

unexpected voice which one hears in Hungary, in a gipsy orchestra. Only, while with them this salt is scattered and falls loosely, with Kreisler it is a savour, and adds just that 'strangeness' without which there can be no exquisite beauty.

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Short, alert, broad-shouldered with small, long-fingered hands (one notices the extreme length of the little finger), Sarasate impresses one, first of all, by a look of somewhat bored good-humour. Crisply curling hair, now quite grey, stands out all over a massive head, trailing carelessly along the forehead. A black moustache draws a heavy line sharply across the pallor of a strange, attractive, contradictory face. The short-sighted eyes, dark, prominent Spanish eyes, have a look of mingled pride, ennui, and amiability: the ennui of a disillusioned man of the world, the amiability of a nature which has remained essentially childlike, the pride of a true Spaniard. The eyes are passionate and stormy, even when the jaded, indifferent face breaks into a smile of unaffected pleasure, as the enthusiasm of a whole audience mounts in applause. The smile can become a laugh of boyish openness – at rehearsal, for instance, when a cat suddenly makes its appearance, jumping from seat to seat until it perches itself beside Ysaye, who is listening in the stalls. The nervousness of a highly strung organization betrays itself in little unconscious movements: the adjustment of a tie, the rapid caress of the moustache, as the violin hangs motionless during the rests. Otherwise the

figure in black stands immovable, only the fingers in action.

But those fingers! Never were there such fingers since Paganini! They tell us that Paganini was more wonderful than Sarasate, as they tell us that Rachel was more wonderful than Sarah Bernhardt. We who have not heard the one or seen the other can but say that it may be so, but that certainly it seems impossible. In the matter of execution there is apparently nothing that Sarasate cannot do; but there never was a greater mistake than to suppose his mastery of his instrument to have in it any of the more doubtful qualities of the virtuoso. Mastery, sheer, absolute mastery, he certainly has, but with him what people term display is but the means to an end. Those fantastic Spanish dances, with their broken rhythm, their pizzicato effects, their bizarre alternations of tone, are not compositions made for our astonishment, but the real national dances, as one hears them in the south of Spain, only made more acute, more intense, more significant. Sarasate's compositions are worthy of closer attention than they have yet received. They have a remarkable individuality, a feverish, troubled brilliance, a passionate intensity. Like his playing, they are curiously modern, for Sarasate is essentially the representative of all that is novel and troubled in the modern world.

No violin sings with so strange an acuteness, becomes so haunting a voice, so pathetic a lyrical cry: the cry of the modern soul. The bow strikes from the strings a shower of crystalline notes: they rain flashingly, a visible brilliance. The light becomes lightning, there is a storm among the strings, and the clear ascending tones broaden out into passionate, troubled chords. Suddenly a heavenly trill rises out of the tumult, like the voice of some more wonderful bird, a bird with a human soul. It rises, rises, until one almost seems to see the lark mounting into the sky, growing tinier against the blue. And then the strain changes, becomes more piercing, becomes almost an agony, as the magical bow seems to play a ghastly measure on strings made out of one's very nerves. Like the most typical modern art, Sarasate's playing is the art of *la névrose*. Wagner in *Tristan und Isolde*, Berlioz in *La Damnation de Faust*, have written the typical music of the present age, music which appeals to us by its mysterious kinship with our vague distresses, its cry from we know not whence, its cry for we know not what. The acting of Sarah Bernhardt has the same distressing, exciting effect; it racks us with the same nervous spasms. In poetry we have the art of Verlaine, in painting we have the art of Whistler, in sculpture, even, the art of Rodin—all of them the art of sensation

sharpened to the point of morbid acuteness. It is just the same appeal that Sarasate makes to us, and Sarasate alone among musicians. In Victor Hugo's phrase respecting Baudelaire, he has 'crée un nouveau frisson.' And to appeal with novel, with poignant effect to our sensations is the aim of the most characteristically modern art.

JOACHIM AND THE INTERPRETATION OF MUSIC

★

In Joseph Joachim we have lost a great artist, the most disinterested artist of his time. Where other violinists have played brilliant music because it was an effective means of display, he has played good music because it was good music. He set himself to master and interpret music as a mediæval grammarian, Browning's if you like, set himself to find out every detail of his own science; for in Joachim there was almost the man of science as well as the artist. It does not appear that, as a player, he was ever an executant of what can exactly be called the highest genius; others have surpassed him in magic, in passion, in rarity, in qualities of human emotion. But no one else can have thought so much over music as music, or understood it so well, or so completely subordinated a whole nature to the great task of interpretation. He seemed always to be playing as if no one was there to listen, applaud or distract. Everyone, I hope, knows the great portrait which Watts did of him. I once made a comparison of that portrait of Joachim with Whistler's portrait of Sarasate, from which I will quote a sentence or two for their bearing on my argument. Sarasate, I said, has in the picture his temperament and his technique, nothing else. Joachim is in the act of playing; he

bends his brows over the music which he is studying, not reading; if there is any platform or any audience, he is unconscious of either; he is conscious only of Beethoven. Note how Sarasate dandles the violin. It is a child, a jewel. He is already thinking of the sound, the flawless tone, not of Beethoven.

In the contrast of those two pictures Joachim is revealed. We see equally what is not in him, the fascination, the appeal to the senses, qualities which tell immensely in the playing of an instrument so personal and sensitive as the violin. I have heard sounds coming from under Joachim's old, distressed fingers which it was an actual pain to hear. His fanatics pretended not to hear them, and would not accept things as they were. Joachim did not transport the senses by miracles of sound: he gave you Beethoven, Brahms, whatever he was playing, with a fidelity which was heroic, inexpressibly helpful and satisfying to everyone who wanted merely to know what Beethoven or Brahms meant to say.

I remember, some years ago, hearing his quartet play the posthumous quartets of Beethoven. I had long puzzled over those strange compositions, and had wondered quite what it was that made musicians look upon them as priceless. Except perhaps a first hearing of *Tristan* I scarcely re-

member a more overwhelming musical impression. What I heard seemed suddenly to become clear; a voice that had never before been heard on earth began to speak in a tongue that was perhaps the speech of angels. The mystery of it all was deepened, and came closer; a singular and remote thing grew to be intimate, familiar with the mind that drank it in as pure music. Joachim was scarcely there, nor his players; one saw occasionally a grave head motionless, the bow moving as if mechanically; the sound came from the four instruments as if one impulse moved and directed them. Had they been playing well? That was not the question; their playing had extinguished a question that seemed no longer necessary: it was Beethoven, not illustrated, presented, commented on, but quietly there, revealed.

No higher praise can be given to ensemble players than that they were forgotten in the music. To be even the leader of a quartet requires a certain self-abnegation, for the whole art of the rendering is one of subordination, in which every performer must play, so to speak, into the hands of his fellows. It is well called chamber music, and is never heard at its best in a large hall. To overhear it is not like hearing an orchestra or a solo instrument. It is the most private form of music, like a long talk among friends. The greatest

musicians have loved it, as poets have loved the sonnet, for its capacity to say so many of the things that lie between the extremes, between the lyric and the drama.

That the Joachim Quartet concerts should have become one of the modes of London fashion is one of the strange things that do sometimes happen. We have had, it is true, thirty or forty years to find out that a great man was coming to us year by year, bringing us riches. Yet the final result, no doubt, was due to the fine persistence of one of those small necessary cliques, which in time lead the fashion they have created. Our debt to Joachim is one of those things that can never be paid; yet it is pleasant to think that the Sargent portrait, and that unforgettable night when Joachim received it, were, in their way, an acknowledgment.

What Joachim taught us of most value was that only honest music is worth listening to, and that a complete honesty is the first requirement in the rendering of it. He taught us to come to him, not because he played difficult or spectacular things with colossal skill, but because he played the best things of their kind that there were in the world. And he taught us to look further than technique, to realize what there was under a technique not only sufficing but self-effacing. This kind of playing, it may well be thought, is the greatest

of all kinds of playing, as it is the most reverent; it is certainly the most serviceable, to the composer and to the public alike. The fashion, in music as in all other matters, is turning towards a worship of virtuosity: the artist must now astonish, seem to overcome incredible difficulties at every moment, as if the dancer were to interrupt his rhythm by a *saut périlleux*. Let technique be all that it can, so long as its art conceals its art. Others could make more beautiful sounds than Joachim, but who could give you so much of the inner meaning of that sound as music? Every shade of it he may not always have given. When music seems to go beyond music, Joachim did not follow it. His prime quality was measure; he had neither defect nor excess; he had his own form of perfection. No one in our time has made so just, so general, a success out of a perfection so unexciting. Between the virtuoso, who is exhibiting himself, and the mere academic scholar, who is proving the extent of his knowledge, comes Joachim, the real 'classic' of his art, who shows us nothing but the music. He loved music too purely, too greedily, for its own sake, to put himself forward at the expense of the slightest intention of a composer. Thus he protected the great musicians, he did not merely popularize them.

There is one violinist now living in whom I see some of the finest qualities of Joachim, with others which were not his, and I am inclined to think that Fritz Kreisler, as an individual player, will be in his way a kind of successor to Joachim, in his interpretation of music. Joachim had a sense of Beethoven which was a divination, of one kind, which we may call the purely musical kind; Kreisler has another kind of divination, less in the brain, by which music becomes human. A certain fiery sensitiveness is in his fingers, which is the speech of his whole nature, a nature which responds to music in a miraculous way. One does not even think of his technique; it is neat, clean, firm, much more than merely adequate; we do not think specially of how he makes his violin sing, or of how he does the difficult things on it. Behind all that indispensable acquirement there is an instinctive power, a force like that of music itself, a responsiveness which is the woman's and a mastery which is the man's. Between the soul of the music and the sound of its voice on his strings there is no interval. Does he hypnotize it, or is he hypnotized by it? It matters little, for he is never in its power. Music sometimes lulls Ysaye into almost the state of a medium, and he passes it on to you in a dream. But Kreisler is awake, joyous with the life that is in the music, and his

ecstasy breaks from him like a divine strength, heroically self-content in action.

To say this of Kreisler, and to admit that Joachim had not the whole of these qualities, in the same degree, is not to depreciate one musician at the expense of another. The emotional qualities which were lacking in Joachim were not required for the particular kind of rendering which he gave. Music was his ritual; he gave it as the unchanging ritual of the Catholic Church is given, 'in the spirit,' yet with a strict adherence to the letter. Just as modern, personal music is unsuited to the bare definite needs of the liturgy, so the abounding energy of a great temperament would have come between him and his faultless rendering of the music which was his religion. He served it with the severe, undistracted devotion of a priest serving the mass.

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Since Liszt the piano has been the most popular of the instruments. It is useless for musicians to abuse it, for it is a compromise of infinite value, capable of giving infinite delight. It can suggest many of the tones of the voice and many of the timbres of the orchestra, and is unhappily coming to a mechanical perfection, a power of resonance and resistance, which enables it to compete in mere sound with the orchestra in that illegitimate and anomalous form, the piano concerto. Technique is in danger of spoiling an instrument in developing a machine. Our modern iron-clads make the battle between music and the attack of the pianist more deadly. Soon we shall have no one but Pachmann to give us a 'crescendo of silences.' The piano will only be played at full speed and with both fists at once.

I suppose one reason of the popularity of piano-playing is that it is easier for the general public to follow music on it than on any other instrument. Consequently more people in an audience can take an intelligent interest in what a pianist does with his piano than in what a violinist does with his violin. Acrobatics on the piano are more tangible, can be followed more easily by the uneducated ear, than acrobatics on the violin. And it is more and more for acrobatics that the public goes to its 'recital.'

No pianist has made a more serious impression in London of late than Leopold Godowsky. He has been called 'the master-miniaturist,' and the title is appropriate. I do not like either his touch or his manner, his form or his interpretation, when he plays Chopin, and when I heard him play the whole of the Preludes I noted down against each my objection to his particular rendering. Never was anything so perfect externally, and so empty of any of that inner meaning which makes Chopin so rare and incalculable an artist. But his playing of the Beethoven Piano Concerto at a London Symphony Orchestra Concert was that of an interpreter. He is himself a composer, of a not too commendable kind, and has done Chopin the ingenious cruelty of setting two studies into one, and of arranging a single study for the left hand only. Pachmann practises them as he practises scales and exercises, and I have heard him do the impossible left-hand study without a flaw. But here, indeed, we have acrobatics, which should be outside of the province of a good musician, as M. Godowsky certainly is. When he plays, with his scholarly surety, the precision of a technique which has trained itself in the brain, his right hand always knows what his left hand will do; sound is like thread between his fingers, to be twisted to any pattern.

To pass from Godowsky to Backhaus is to pass from a learned gnome to a sullen angel. It seems as if in Backhaus we are to have a new pianist. His manner is unlike that of any other, it has a kind of priestly decorum, as if he were a devout person, reverent of the form of his art and perfectly observant of it. With his pontifical dignity he seems to render the soul rather than the brain or the senses in music, and is satisfying rather than stimulating. Within the limits of his temperament, which are marked, he has a meditative quality, a kind of taste and judgment, singularly attractive, and helped by a sufficient technique. His Chopin is interesting, and if it is not to be compared seriously with Pachmann's, which one may well suppose to be almost that of Chopin himself, it might be imagined, from the sentiment of it, to be George Sand, turned musician, playing over to Chopin his own music. The best criticism that could possibly be made of Backhaus would be to put into words the attentive gestures with which, at one of his concerts, Pachmann followed or rather preceded his playing. An evident sympathy, not wholly satisfied, betrayed itself in infinite nervous movements, as if to prompt and restrain the fingers of the player, which might touch the notes ever so delicately, and yet hurt some fine shade. It was with an

exquisite solicitude that the master watched over an experiment so hazardous.

'There are times when Busoni astonishes one,' I wrote, in a discussion of technique and the artist, and I set down Ysaye as the artist and Busoni as the technician. The pianist still astonishes one, not only at times, but all the time; yet he remains the technician. He is more marvellous, in his way, than ever, and when I heard him play four pieces of Liszt (three Sonnets of Petrarch and a reminiscence of Dante) it seemed to me that that was somewhat how Liszt must have played his own music. Everything that was in the music was given to us on the piano. The bells were there, the cataracts were there, the hollow thunder and sharp lightning were there; everything was as Liszt had written it, and everything was equally unlike Petrarch or Dante. Titles to good music are scarcely necessary; but, if once a composer chooses to limit your mind by a title, you are bound to consider the relation of his music to what he tells you he had meant to suggest. When Liszt tells us that he is writing 'after reading Dante,' or when he gives the numbers of the sonnets of Petrarch that he is illustrating, we expect in the Dante many severe and supreme qualities, and in the Petrarch nothing either pretty or spectacular. As it is, the Petrarch music is both,

and Busoni gave them to us with perfect sympathy, in his manner of dazzling, conscious, soulless skill, impeccable of its kind, as an interpretation of what Liszt did, not what he meant. The Dante was, if anything, more wonderfully rendered, but how unimaginative an Inferno one heard, not fire but fireworks, not Dante's but Doré's. Paradiso came later, with the high-pitched, tinkling bells, sounding, on the piano, really like bells. It was all a triumph for Busoni, but a triumph over difficulties and displays which were there for some effect, not for their own sake, as in any way representative of the beautiful soul of Petrarch, or the august soul of Dante. Everything that is in Liszt, or rather that is in these characteristic pieces, was in the playing; there was the orchestra, as if present in the room; there were the arpeggios and the rhetorical pause after them; there were the trills, trickles, electrical flashes, low murmurs; all were there, all the gigantic shows of which Liszt was the diabolic showman. There were moments when music seemed to annihilate itself, and still the great unmoved craftsman sat there and thundered with indifference. The Liszt, after all, was Liszt, and the rendering did full justice to it; but there came afterwards an encore, still Liszt, in which sound was tortured into a burden and bewilderment to the ears, as a cinematograph is a bedazzlement and

distraction to the eyes. Is this, I asked myself, this mere honest sympathetic Bechstein piano, transformed invisibly but audibly into the likeness of one of those monstrous mechanical freaks, which, besides a keyboard, have drums and trumpets about them, contrived cunningly for the extinction of music in sound?

I heard Ysaye and Pugno strike the first notes of the Saint-Saëns Sonata, I was plunged into an ecstasy of sound, in which delight had no voice but only the sense of hearing. Pugno was perfect, but Ysaye excelled even himself. He swam deeper than we in that pool of ecstasy; nothing existed for him in the world; the music sucked out his soul and senses and he bent and brooded over it with a delighted mastery which was almost humble. It is almost terrible to listen to music intensified to such madness of sanity. Only Ysaye, among the great executants, can do that; and not only because of a fine technique which is not always flawless, but because Ysaye is in himself a form of music, tormented and exalted beyond reason.

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Miss Fanny Davies is the Mrs. Hemans of the pianoforte. Mrs. Hemans, it may be necessary to explain, was a famous poetess of the early part of last century. She was the most ladylike poet we have ever had, and her reputation was at one time so large in England and America that an American professor 'hardly feared to assert,' in print, that there was 'not a family of the middling class,' in his own country, ' in which some of the poems had not been read.' Women thought she represented their sex in a form of art which had been largely occupied by men. At last, they said, we have a feminine corrective to the too notorious male Byron; here are 'poems of the affections' as they ought to be written, tamed to the drawing-room; and there is no doubt that Mrs. Hemans will be immortal.

Only, things have turned out otherwise. Few now read even *Casabianca*, except children in Board schools; and, since Mrs. Browning came, Mrs. Hemans has been almost extinct. But the type persists. A woman can be great in several of the arts, though apparently not in all; for there has never been a great woman composer nor a great woman painter. But what women have the faculty for, above all other executive faculties, is to pro-

duce an imitation of the real thing so much prettier than the thing itself that the majority of their fellow-creatures will infinitely prefer it. Look at the whole shoal of women novelists at the present day, with an exception or two (Olive Schreiner, at all events, who seems already to belong to the past), and you will see one popularity coming up after another, all flaunting and fading in turn, or, if they have not yet faded, waiting for the cold, critical moment, when minor talents become posthumous and genius becomes immortal. Women's and men's art are two totally different things, and between them lies only a land of vague shadows. An article has lately appeared in *Le Censeur*, the only critical paper of any value in France, under the title *Comment les femmes deviennent écrivains*, written by a Mme. Aurel, who knows her sex. She tells us how *seule, la femme rumine assez son cœur pour qu'il trouve un moyen de prendre forme.* She shows how, to women, *le sentiment est la source des idées.* And she defines woman as *cet artiste inouï qui demeure trop jeune pour la vie, et dont les lèvres, a peine décloses, qui défendent encore son âme, vont peut-être s'ouvrir.* Only under such conditions can a woman produce vital work, abandoning herself to her sex, to her instinct, to that which in her is nearest to the earth and to the beasts.

Now look in all directions at our Mrs. Hemans

who are content to be feminine, that dreadful compromise between nature and nullity which produces the lady-like. The lady, though most likely useless for art, is one of the divine growths of the earth. But the lady and the lady-like are two wholly different things. Mrs. Hemans was lady-like, and so came to decorate a long gallery with waxworks that try to blush like life, and have tears modelled elegantly on their faces. Her sisters are all around us, writing novels, painting pictures, playing on instruments. They imagine that they are producing art, as men produce art, without sacrificing more than part of themselves, with a skill partly exterior.

Miss Fanny Davies is the Mrs. Hemans of the pianoforte. What one observed at her concert at the Steinway Hall was that she has learnt to play the instrument as clever and attentive schoolgirls play it; she has acquired a thoroughly lady-like accomplishment. But she is not content with this; she wishes to put sentiment, expression, into the music. She leans over it caressingly, as if she were tying little coloured ribbons, faint pink and faint blue, to a doll's dress. The music indeed is as lifeless as a wax doll; Brahms is drained of his brains and Schumann robbed of his soul. The big sounds of Brahms go out in smudges, the pedals drowning them in an effort to be loud and

large. The little shy sounds of Schumann are constantly forgetting that they are shy or child-like and strutting out boastfully in an ineffective dash or prance. Nowhere is there a sense of the music as it was meant by the composer, nowhere a new interpretation by an executant who gives a personal reading, which may or may not be the composer's but is at least alive. Here, so far as there is any art, it is a dead art, an art of agrément, perhaps, to the moderate-minded, but meaningless to those who go to music for more than the notes. And there is not even, to make up for this inanition, a convincing technique. The sonorities of the piano have not been mastered; not a single clear passage in octaves, not a good round fortissimo, was heard throughout the whole of the Brahms variations. That music, not his best, gives many opportunities to a fine executant. But here the edge was taken off the staccato, the merry movements jingled, the broad movements were clouded over, and altogether Brahms was hardly to be known as Brahms. The choice of Schumann's *Waldscenen* was a charming one, and one, in a sense, disinterested, for a child could play them, and no player for applause would have chosen them. But with every desire to give them their real value, Miss Davies could not get inside them; she could only follow them and repeat them, as one repeats a pleasant

task. The flowers faded away and the perfume went out of them; the lonely pool had lost its shudder; and as for the prophet-bird, one had only to remember Pachmann. No one could play those trills after Pachmann; but Miss Davies did not even stop to give reverence to the little human song which comes in the midst of the bird-notes. There, in the playing of those few bars, an interpreter of Schumann may well come to judgment.

And now think for a moment what a woman can make of the keyboard. Though Mme. Schumann is dead, we have still one great woman pianist among us: Mme. Carreño. She is not flawless in her technique, she can hurry and even stumble, she can almost destroy the form of the music which she is playing by the violence of the feeling with which she fills it. But what passion she can evoke out of passionate music, how her heart and senses, Spanish and a woman's, seem to cry and palpitate out of the ardent and resonant sounds! She puts herself into all the music that she plays, and thus may exasperate the lover of a particular rendering of a particular composition. But if she puts her own life, at least she puts life, and an abounding life, into the music that waits, most of all, for that.

Now this, to the people who admire Miss Fanny Davies, is the forbidden thing. I can imagine them thinking Mme. Carreño positively vulgar.

Why, they will say, here is a soul really almost naked, and we would have souls elegantly aureoled. They do not see that music is not a thing which can be made intelligible by a cold imitation of its sounds, but that it must be created over again by every player. They do not see that a player must first of all be a person of genius, and then must know how to be shamelessly sincere. They do not realize that external talent, care, or capability is useless and meaningless when it is not warmed and illuminated by something which can never be taught. To the academic mind such playing as that of Miss Davies seems estimable, admirable even, and students are sent to hear it, as if anything worth learning could be learned from lifeless things.

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Of those divine beings who have made the happiness of the world many have been despised and neglected, but the cruellest martyrdom on record in the annals of art is the martyrdom of a faultless man and faultless artist: Mozart. He went through the world like a child tortured by cruel hands, that it might sing and dance for public amusement. His life and death have left an indelible stain on the Austrian Court, nobility, and official musicians of his time. They injured him, they insulted him, they took for nothing the incomparable gifts for which he asked little. His would-be benefactors closed their purse-strings against him; and one man, let his infamous name be written in full, – the wealthy Baron von Swieten – for whom he had carried out a vast, thankless, unpaid labour, was the man who put down to the account of the penniless widow the sum of 8 florins 56 kreutzers for the grave, and 3 florins for the hearse, when the body of Mozart was cast into an unmarked corner of the earth. Mozart was the slave and spoil of kings, the creator of supreme beauty for swine, for whom no Gadarene steep had been prepared by destiny. The world did its utmost to make his life miserable, laying pitfalls in his way, stealing from him, betraying him, letting him die with 60 florins of

ready money to leave to his wife and children. And this man, who was making the greatest music of the age for Court theatres and archiepiscopal halls, was reduced to beg for appointments, of which his best lover Haydn said nobly: 'I find it difficult to control my indignation when I think that this great and wonderful man is still searching for an appointment, and not a single prince or monarch has thought of giving one.' When it was too late, fortune beckoned to him. Here is his last comment on the situation: 'I am on the confines of life, I will die without having known any of the delights my talent would have brought me, and yet life is so full of beauty and just now my prospects seem to shape themselves auspiciously. Alas, one cannot alter one's destiny. No one on earth is master of his fate and I must be resigned. It will be all as Providence wills.'

What Providence, or the ignorant cruelty of man, willed for Mozart I have been reading in two volumes of biography. The book is living, and to read it is to suffer over again this perfect and punished life. For Mozart was perfect, not only in his art, but in his life. Not a virtue, not a grace was lacking; he had a divine purity, which is seen expressing itself in the innocent letter to his father, in which he declares the necessity of his marrying. But he had no consciousness of out-

ward things; his hands, swift and certain on the harpsichord, were idle things off the notes, so that he could not cut up his food at table without cutting his fingers. He loved travelling, and a landscape, seen from the carriage window, set his thoughts working towards music; only, unlike Beethoven they never settled there, so purely was his inspiration a matter of sound. He died of sound. It began to whisper to him when he was a baby, and at three years of age sought to find harmonious successions of thirds on the keyboard; it murmured on lips and cheeks as he lay dying, and a passage with kettledrums came back to him out of his *Requiem*. Music absorbed him and consumed him, a miraculous flame always burning; so that at the age of four he played the piano, and at five composed four minuets and an allegro for it and played the organ, and at six went with his father and sister, five years his elder and both prodigies, through Austria, France, England, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, playing before kings, and composing and publishing music. He had already distinguished a difference of an eighth of a tone between two violins, and had come to feel what could be terrible in sound, turning pale and almost fainting at the sound of a trumpet. At fourteen he wrote down from memory Allegri's Miserere, after a single

hearing of it in the Pope's Chapel in Rome. By the age of eighteen he had composed two hundred and forty-two pieces.

Music was his heaven, and he lived in it through the whole course of his mortal life; and that divine world, in which he walked like one of the angels, never betrayed him. Men made use of him, gave him praise, let him triumph for a moment, and then set him aside with empty hands. He was overburdened with his genius from his birth; he found no friend, except his friendly wife, to help him to bear it. Immeasurably rich in the spirit, the world gave him poverty. The stingy Emperor, Gluck dying, gave him his place as Imperial Court composer, and bade him pay for the compliment by taking eight hundred in place of two thousand florins. Later on he asks for the place of Kapellmeister, and his appeal is not answered. At last, in despair, he offers his services of deputy Kapellmeister to the cathedral, for nothing; and is accepted. No fees come to him from his publishers, a hundred ducats are handed to him, as one fees a servant, at the end of the first performance of *Die Zauberflöte*; and presently, when success, useless to him, has come, he lies on his death-bed, his watch under his pillow, counting the hours: 'Now they are singing the "Queen of the Night",' he would say.

Only once did he have an unmitigated success, a great popular outburst in his honour; and that was in no Austrian soil, but in Prague, which went wild over *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and commissioned *Don Giovanni*. For a week, the only week in his life, except the many in which he was ill and in bed, he wrote no music, he gave himself up to the delight of for once being loved, understood, applauded. But the applause brought no more than a moment's gold, and we see him, in the last year of his life, consenting to beg, asking for charity that is nowhere to be found. The eternal publisher, putting two or three ducats into his hand, had said: 'Compose in a simpler and more popular style or I will print no more of your compositions nor will I give you another kreutzer.' Then, while he is writing, on an urgent commission, the divine *Zauberflöte*, the gayest music in the world, hurried on by his taskmaster, already feeling the first signs of his sickness coming upon him, there came the monstrous, malignant farce of a fool, the sealed unsigned letter, the mysterious demand for a *Requiem*, the payment in advance: all descending on him as an omen of his death, and being indeed the last blow shattering mind and body.

The price that Mozart paid for immortality was his martyred body his racked mind, his inter-

rupted soul. The soul of genius grows in the soil of the body like a seed. With Mozart it was a tiny seed with little earth about it; it grew rapidly into a flower of strange loveliness, that having exhausted the little earth that was its sustenance, dies at the root in full flower. In Beethoven the seed has a deep soil about it; it grows slowly and outlasts all weathers, flowering late and lasting long. Genius and genius may be equal, but it is the affair of Providence, as Mozart said, whether the soul is to be given an appropriate body and the wherewithal to go on living without sorrow. Mozart had a nature of pure brightness: he had a child's love of glittering things, and the jewelled rings which princes gave him instead of money were a moment's delight to him before he had to pawn them for food and fire. He loved dancing and would go to fancy dress balls as Harlequin, loving to show off an accomplishment which he professed to have mastered better than music. When he was in Prague, writing out the score of *Don Giovanni*, he would join heartily in the national game of skittles, sitting at a little table in his host's garden and leaving the score whenever his turn came to throw the ball. He liked billiards and would get some strange, musical inspiration from the movement of the balls. He was careful of his dress, and the barber who shaved

and curled him every morning has related that he would get up from his chair and move about the room, 'stung with the splendour of a sudden thought,' and oblivious of comb or razor. These little passing whims and vanities take on almost a tragic air as we read the darker, more constant incidents of a life which was made carefully on another pattern. Mozart had no power of resistance, and the world and his own swift and devouring genius between them drove him incessantly onward, until body and soul sank into the only possible repose. It is the world's curse and foul crime, repeated age after age, that no divine being is to be allowed to share in this life the unearned portion of the average man: happiness.

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HECTOR BERLIOZ was born in La Côte-Saint-André (Isère) on December 11, 1803; he died in Paris, at the age of sixty-five, on March 8, 1869. For absolute originality he was the greatest musician France had ever produced; he not only invented new rhythms and unheard-of discords, but an entirely new form of orchestration. He had the pride of genius; he carried his head high over the multitudes, who never saw the immensity of his stature. Weingartner, when he edited his complete works, said of him: 'In spite of Wagner and Liszt, we should not be where we are if Berlioz had not lived.' Wagner and Liszt and Strauss learnt from Berlioz – the two great ones to their own advantage, the man of mere talent to his disadvantage; for Strauss is the only decadent in music, and he has tried to debauch music, as Klinger has tried to debauch sculpture, for the satisfaction of a craving which is not 'simple, sensuous, and passionate,' but elaborate, intellectual and frigid.

In some of Berlioz' music there is a strange weariness, as of one 'tired of being merely human,' of one who has evoked new Dances of Death, and has become the chronicler of the praise and ridicule of Death. The shapes that writhe in his hell's fumes are phantasmal, and move us neither by

their sorrows nor their hates; they are not intended to be human, except, indeed, in the wizard humanity of Death. To hear Wagner's *Tristan* after hearing Berlioz' *Faust*, is a revelation of how immensely Wagner overtopped the genius of Berlioz. Each time I hear *Tristan* the beauty increases, the mere excitement diminishes. Its depth is like its peace, beyond the storm. The end is like a great illumination: I see light. Seen, as I saw it in Munich, in the Prinz-Regenten Theater with its hideous German roof, like the roof of an hotel dining-room, in patterns of all colours, one admirable effect was the throwing back of the stage so as to give one the illusion of a picture and of invisible music. Then I realized the unity of the music itself, of the voices, and of the scenery; the music rising out of 'the mystic gulf,' the picture, the human illusion, on the other side of it.

What, in Beethoven, was a struggle for the discovery of a new basis of musical language, has been seized on by later composers only in its external contrasts. Berlioz seized upon what was most chaotic in the sketchwork of Beethoven, and, using it as a misunderstood magic symbol, called unnatural visions about him. What he had to say to people was so wonderful, so entirely unnatural, that he could never have said it in simple words; he needed a huge array of the most complicated

machines in order to proclaim, by the help of many-wheeled and delicately adjusted mechanism, what a simple human organism could not possibly have uttered, just because it was so entirely inhuman. Each height and depth of this mechanism's capacity Berlioz explored (as Wagner himself realized), with the result of developing a positively astounding knowledge: so that Berlioz, in a sense, was the veritable saviour of our world of absolute music.

I have referred to Beethoven. In 1802, he wrote a tragic confession of his unendurable agonies, of the treatment of his unspeakable nephew, of his bodily sickness, of his constant series of passionate and brief loves. Yet it was at that period that Beethoven wrote his *Second Symphony*. I turn to Berlioz' analysis of it in his *Étude critique des Symphonies de Beethoven*, and I read: 'Le *scherzo* est aussi franchement gai dans sa capricieuse fantaisie, que *l'andante* a été complètement heureux et calme; car tout est riant dans cette symphonie, les élans guerriers du premier *allegro* sont eux-mêmes tout à fait exempts de violence; on n'y saurait voir que l'ardeur juvénile d'un noble cœur dans lequel se sont conservées intactes les plus belles illusions de la vie.' – *Les plus belles illusions de la vie!* 'The fond hope I brought with me here,' writes Beethoven at

Heiligenstadt, 'of being to a certain extent cured, now utterly forsakes me. As the autumn leaves pale and wither, so are my hopes blighted.'

Berlioz' Overture to *Benvenuto Cellini* has an admirable beginning – sheer music, and personal music; the middle like good Italian music of the time. There is in it no unity: he is aiming at stage-effects, noise for noise's sake, and yet the music is sincere, but never elemental, rarely fine. It is, however, truly a musical Cellini with characteristics which Berlioz was quite literary enough to attribute to his subject the strong, coarse, assertive artist, with his big defiance. But he has not made a whole of it; it is not a creation: a splendid sketch after a given subject, and a sketch which is entirely musical sketching.

Yet there is in it sensitiveness, a pure delight in genuine, though always a little unusual, melody; which, if one may say so, is at once deliberate and spontaneous. One is interested, impressed, yet one judges. Beethoven one never judges; but in the *Missa Solennis* the music goes its own way and is turned into a vast and shapeless oratorio, an anomaly of the concert-room. *Fidelio* is an opera which has not even the formal merits of the best operas produced in the Italian methods; it lives a separate life in divine fragments, and is wholly expressive only in the two great overtures,

of which only the second is properly speaking dramatic. The Love Scene in Berlioz' *Roméo et Juliette* is a reverie, which brings before us perfume and a garden, the night and two lovers. It has extreme delicacy; intense, but not broadly or deeply human. It is mainly background; the atmosphere is there, and a suggestion of drama, beyond the music, which, however, exists perfectly well without it. There is no passion, but a passionate fullness of beauty. Not love, but the ecstasy of beauty. It is fine, not great, music. *Queen Mab* is full of piercing inhuman quality. One hears light, moonbeams, and dewdrops. I have never heard sound so delicate and so surprising. One hushes one's breath, as when, at night, one listens to catch distant and mysterious sounds. Berlioz has humour, in all his best music: the fantastic; here it is a fairy humour; and this shimmers and palpitates and glides upon moonbeams.

The music of Berlioz, heard at its best in *Faust* – though for full appreciation one must hear also the *Episode dans la Vie d'un Artiste*, the *Roméo et Juliette*, the *Enfance du Christ* – has all the disconcerting surprise of Wagner to a conservative musician. There is something feverish, morbid, exciting about it; something almost unholy in its complicated orgies of sound. Berlioz can be

exquisitely simple, but with him simplicity is the last attainment of an intricately elaborated art: he requires three military bands to produce an effect of pianissimo. The palette of his orchestration has more cunning combinations of colour than even Wagner's, and he is prodigal of colours. Notice, for instance, in the celebrated setting of the *Rakoczy March*, conventional for Berlioz, the sudden splashes of colour which startle us from time to time before one is fairly blinded by the stupendous blaze of sound at the end. An innovator always, Berlioz was the first to attempt deliberate programme-music (as in the *Episode dans la Vie d'un Artiste*), and many parts of *Faust* are composed with a similarly deliberate aim of tone-painting. There is the adorable ballet of sylphs for instance, with its magical dew-drop cobweb of harmony; the minuet of will-o'-the-wisps, a dance of glittering caprice; the mocking, ironical laughter of the orchestra in the Mephistopheles music; the ride to the abyss, with its fatal monotonous progression, a galloping nightmare. And when all pandemonium opens, and the infernal chorus breaks forth, the music becomes an unspeakable horror; it screams with agony, it buffets us with the sounds of orgy, it exults in the triumph of hell. No doubt it is one of the defects of Berlioz that he cannot be common-

place; like Beddoes, he was 'tired of being merely human.' And so there is something abnormal about most of his work, and he is never so successful as in scenes where tragedy becomes grotesque, where humanity breaks bounds, where the other world surges into this. He is the musician of the supernatural, of the wicked powers especially, of witches, of madness, of bad dreams, of the lower elements of darkness. Even the lyric passion of Faust and Margaret (as in that great love-duet, with its radiant pulsations of song, its aching intensity) must have Mephistopheles in the background, a note of discord. Berlioz, too, is the only composer who has written really witty music. The scene in the wine-cellar is full of every kind of humour; grotesque, as in Brander's song, acutely fantastic, as in the legend of the flea, absolutely blasphemous in the Amen fugue on the dead rat. It is with something of Marlowe's remorselessness that Berlioz hurries his Faust, a sport of the wicked Fates, on that headlong 'ride to the abyss,' which is really imminent from the first entry of Mephistopheles. And he has gone yet farther than Marlowe, in opening the very gates of hell, and calling forth a chorus of the damned to exult over the victory of evil in a language found in the *Inferno* of Dante.

Tortured by his own genius, Berlioz, on the

whole, had a tragic and a tormented existence. His energy was unflagging; at times he was like Tantalus, lured by the shadow of dim water. He may have been aware of this, when he wrote to Wagner: 'I can paint the moon only when I see her image reflected at the bottom of a well.' He was certainly aware of Paris's indifference to him when he also says: 'I am compelled to make journeys which are anything but pleasure trips in order to gain a livelihood, as Paris gives me nothing but Dead Sea fruit.' As I have referred to Wagner it is curious to note that Berlioz writes on the failure of *Tannhäuser* in Paris in March 1861: 'The hissing was tremendous, in spite of the presence of the Emperor and Empress in the Imperial box. The Emperor was amused. After the performance was over, people were heard on the staircase calling Wagner a knave, a fool, an insolent fellow. The press is unanimous in crushing it. I am cruelly avenged.' In what way was Berlioz avenged? He was avenged by the cruelty of his own silence.

*

THE greatest of modern French musicians, Claude Debussy, who was born in 1862, at Saint-Germain-en-Leys, died in Paris on the 26th of March. The first representation of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, in 1902, marks a date in the history of the musical drama, and in this work one sees an entirely new kind of modern music; in fact, he revealed himself as a poet of the senses.

Pelléas et Mélisande I never heard, but, on hearing Debussy's symphonic prelude to Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, I was not sure that Debussy was not heard more significantly in company with the abstract gaiety of Bach, in the Brandenberg Concerto, and with the human joy of Beethoven, in the Pianoforte Concerto, than even with the more modern music of Liszt and Saint-Saëns and with the sublime fifth symphony of Beethoven. It was a daring thing to let these windy voices be heard after the argentine and angelic laughter of the Piano Concerto. That had been played admirably, and Godowsky had seemed to me for the first time an interpreter, quite in his element, as in his sharp, clear, attentive way he wove the trickle of his smaller sound in and out among the waves of the great flood of the orchestra. It seemed as if nothing could adequately follow this divine entertainment. But

when the Debussy began, vague, hesitating, a mist of light, there was no shock, only another fainter kind of pleasure, and, curiously enough, akin to the Bach and the Beethoven by something in it thin and piercing and delicate in speech. When it was over, it was as if a cloud had passed; nothing remained but the recollection of a thing that had been beautiful and had vanished. *Mais les nuages . . . là-bas . . . les merveilleux nuages!* I listened, forgetting the poem, that most learned intoxication in modern French poetry, and I heard, first of all, as if a ghost were sighing, a lonely voice, towards which all at once kind echoes begin to fly, fluttering nearer; then a voice (is it quite human?) comes through the wind among the reeds, uttering a vague pain which is half unconscious and half inarticulate. The orchestra is filled with little crying voices, sympathetic or mocking, breezes, laughters, sighs, the unhuman things touched with human pains under this sunlight and the clouds of their afternoon; all things float and escape, return and are never captured. And then I remember the line:

Ces nymphes, je les veux perpetuer!

And then a pipe sounded, saying: None the less, let us be merry, before the evening. I heard the little joys of tiny Beardsley creatures, dancing to

the tinkling of elfin bells, through which I heard always the unceasing wind among the reeds. And the end came suddenly, broad sunlight, the single note of a bell, like a throb of perfectly happy ecstasy: the faun was content.

So much the music told me, and so much music, being a creative not an illustrative art, is able to tell without words. There is no scene-painting or word-painting, it is not programme music; music says over again in its own language the essential part of what has been said in the language of poetry. And here, it seems to me, we have a perfectly legitimate interaction of the two arts. There is no confusion between them, no conflict, neither asks the aid of the other. Mallarmé's poem is as beautiful without the music, and Debussy's music as beautiful without the poem. The music is, in a sense, inspired by the poetry, as the poem itself might equally well have been inspired by the music. Both have an equal magic of atmosphere, and belong equally to that most modern kind of art which aims only at evocation. They have arisen from two separate creative impulses, neither copied from the other, or an imitation of the other; each beginning over again from the beginning.

And, just as when Mallarmé wrote the poem, it was considered unintelligible, not poetry at all, the words of a charlatan, and so forth; so,

Debussy's music, being new of its kind, and not made on traditional lines, has seemed doubtful to many people, not music at all, they say. Well, they have said that of other composers before Debussy. There is a little clique in France which enters its protest by saying that there was no music before Debussy. It is a witty and charming thing to say, especially when it is said seriously, and by musical critics who prefer *L'Après-midi d'un faune* to the *Pastoral Symphony*.

Now Debussy, great or small though he may be, does not try to be anything but himself, and if he is really like Mallarmé, that is an accident of temperament. I think the *Faune* prelude is enough to show that he has at least a touch of that strangeness without which there is no exquisite beauty. I do not find that touch in any modern English music, but as it is in Purcell and in the Elizabethan song-writers, I do not think we are condemned, as a nation, to be without it.

2

The adventurous Parisian Quartet played in London the music of nine composers. The songs and most of the piano music, was a kind of music of insects, and the Catalan pianist, nervous and deliberate, made over again on the piano, with his bird-like pounces upon the notes, which responded

eagerly to his fierce caresses, a new music which is *cruelle et câline*, a thing made to astonish, intoxicate or subdue. He puts no passion into music that is without it, but he draws from it all its essence, makes it ring like bells and veils it in bright mist, follows it in all its excessive speeds, and lingers with it in its gardens under the rain; he is a kind of malign attendant spirit, letting it loose and accompanying it on its freakish errands.

Of the nine composers whose music was thus faithfully interpreted, two stood out from the others with a definite superiority. These were Ernest Chausson, who seems to close the past, and Claude Debussy, who seems to open the future. Chausson, whose work has hardly ever been played in England, and who is not too well known even in France, was, it is evident, a man of genius, a real musician. His quartet was the finest and the most vital thing done by these French players, his piano *Paysage* the most reticent and satisfying, and his two songs delicately inspired. Verlaine's *La Lune blanche* became its own 'exquisite hour' or moment: one saw the white moon brooding, one felt the silence of love in the gracious silence of the music in the refrain, and at the end the bird which had been singing suddenly flew upward, as if into heaven. The Charles Cros ballad, a little tragedy in a few stanzas, was followed and envel-

oped and transfigured by the music, now lamenting with a brave sorrow, now hopeless, now insane and ecstatic in the last sudden *étreinte de l'absente*. This song was a masterpiece in the difficult art of setting words to music, but it was after all in the quartet that Chausson was seen in his full complement of genius. Here was a music which was born, not made, a strange boisterous gaiety filled and heartened the first movement; the second was slow, haunting, full of mournful passion; the third, a sort of folk-song, came with frank entertainment; the finale, with its Spanish motive, brings in a new, more deeply lyrical element, and with its outbursts of honest joyfulness ends, really ends, a work of equal beauty and significance. It was rendered with a fine, simple vigour, in which nothing was lost of its rich musical substance, its form at once strict and free, its whole noble achievement.

After Chausson comes Debussy. He is more of a problem, and is not to be solved by the hearing of a single quartet. It was divinely played, and it was through this playing that I was able at last to enter into the somewhat dark and secret shadows of this wood. Here, if anywhere, is a new kind of music, not merely showy nor wilfully eccentric, but filled with an instinctive quality of beauty, which can pass from mood to mood, sur-

prise us, lead us astray, but end by leading us to the enchantment in the heart of what I have called the wood. But woods, however vague, are too precise for this music, which suggests nothing but music. It is content to be lovely in a new and unfamiliar way, the pure remote melody always just creeping in and always just held back, so that it may suggest the more. That is the modern method, the lyrical method of Verlaine, and that is why this composer, who is in no sense literary, can go for a title or an impulse to Mallarmé or to Maeterlinck or to the *Blessed Damozel* of Rossetti. There is no direct speech in the quartet, but there is no emptiness, no lack of meaning. It soothes and intoxicates, and leads you at its will.

There is a greater form of music than this, and the malign Marnold, who prefers *L'Après-midi d'un faune* to the *Pastoral Symphony*, is joking very pleasantly, as Debussy himself knows how to joke, in his *Toccata*, for instance, which is the musical equivalent of *Diabolo*. The whole point at issue is this: that here is an achievement of a new kind, which can be set somewhere in the same world of the old weightier kind. You may begin by hating it, but you will surrender, while before Fauré and Ravel and the others you will find out that this genuine quality is not in them, or only

here and there by accident. Fauré has a small and pretty talent, which will go the way of the stronger but not permanent talent of Saint-Saëns. Vincent d'Indy is without inspiration, Séverac scatters his fresher talent casually, Ravel does the worst possible things with a maddening energy.

To hear the quartet of Ravel between the quartets of Chausson and Debussy was instructive. Here was a buzzing and fluttering, here was a wandering as of clouds which cannot be motionless and which efface each other. Originality is sought by every means, but never comes; the whole aim is effect, and even that end is not attained. In the piano-pieces of the same composer, and in too much of the rest of the show-pieces which one heard, the aim is at yet another kind of effect, an effect not less unmusical: a kind of external realism, the imitation, as clever as you like, of galloping horses, clattering water, booming bells. Here and there, as in part of the *Coin de Cimetière* of Déodat de Séverac, there is some suggestion beyond the crude statement of a fact not worth stating, as that a bell can be made to sound in such or such a way on the piano, if you go to a pianist so marvellously gifted for this kind of experiment as Richard Viñes. It is curious that nearly all of this empty, exterior music is written for the treble notes of the piano, and that the

main part of it is in runs, arpeggios, and the other decorative devices which disguise a plain meaning. Only the *Paysage* of Chausson had any of the elder modesty which once graced the piano.

I found more music in the songs than in the piano pieces. They at least sang. Yet how many of these settings were more than mere tiny flutterings of sound about a song which, in its words, was already a delicate or pathetic music? When Schubert takes a song of Goethe or Schiller and finds his own melodies for it, the song becomes heightened, illuminated; a greater thing than the song in words is born of the music. But what does even Debussy, who has the most character, skill, daintiness and originality of all the younger French musicians, add to Verlaine's priceless *Il pleure dans mon cœur* or to his miraculous *Mandoline*. The *Mandoline* is echoed, like a bird answering a bird, the tinkle in the music is the same tinkle as in the verse; but what new light falls upon all this 'elegance of delight' in any more enchanting 'ecstasy of the moon'? What deeper pathos does the music add to the words of *Il pleure dans mon cœur* which are already *romances sans paroles*? An insect's web has been woven across a flower; it glitters a little, and at a breath it evaporates; and the flower and its perfume remain.

3

The name of Claude Debussy has been known in England for several years, but little of his music had been given here until the composer came over to conduct the *Après-midi* and another later orchestral work, *La Mer*. *Pelléas et Mélisande* still remains to be heard in London, and until that has been given, with its due scenic effects, it is scarcely possible to come to a final conclusion in regard to this 'new music,' which at the moment seems quite likely to become a fashion.

Debussy is the Mallarmé of music, not because he has set *L'Après-midi d'un faune* to sound, but because the music has all the qualities of the poem, and none, for instance, of Verlaine. Verlaine is a purely lyrical poet, quite simple, instinctively a singer; no effort is visible in his work, nothing is made, everything is born. He evokes, through sheer genius; Mallarmé suggests, through a genius which has something in it of the artificial. Mallarmé has a beauty of his own, calculated, new, alluring; and Debussy is not less original, aloof, deliberately an artist. He has made for himself a new art which is like no other music, but which it is impossible to call anything but music. It is thin, remote, a gossamer-web; it is diaphanous, frolicsome, fantastic; it plays with sounds, bringing

new colour out of them; he gives us melody without fixed tunes, he uses his orchestra to do certain feats, not big, unpleasant ones, as Strauss does, but small, delicate, acrobatic ones. It is personal, yet intensely French, for all the influences, Russian, German, Eastern it has the typical French qualities of lightness, brilliance, agility; it requires little material for its purpose. To play the Overture to *Egmont* at the beginning of the concert was a kind of criticism, for there we got the great conception, together with the large, simple, satisfying development. But to put into the same programme a tedious Concerto of a Saxon musician of the name of Volkmann was a mere irrelevance, unless it was there to show that music can be written according to the rules, giving opportunity to the showy executant to please an undiscriminating public, and yet can remain meaningless to the mind, irritating to the intelligent ear. It came as a jar between Beethoven and Schubert, intensifying, perhaps by the contrast, one's pleasure in what was insubstantial but genuine in Debussy.

Of the two pieces chosen to represent the earlier and later work *L'Après-midi d'un faune* remains the most delicately perfect. It is a lovely, individual, exquisitely skilful composition; it has precisely the same beauty as the poem, and it is

in no sense programme music. It matches the poem because the art of making is the same in poet and musician. A rare, learned beauty comes into the world; it brings us new sensations, delights our senses with new appeals; but it does not transfix us with the sharpness of delight which the great vital things carry in their hands like arrows.

La Mer, which consists of 'three symphonic sketches,' is a work of ten years later date. Its method is the same, its harmonies the same; it is perhaps slightly more imitative of natural sounds. The first movement was disappointing, and seemed to have been made with great pains for the purpose. On a first hearing it left no impression except that of unsuccessful effort. With the second movement the real Debussy appeared suddenly. Here he was spontaneous and himself, a dancer, a singer of strange songs, a companion in the luminous *Jeux de vagues*. The music was elfin, with some of the daintiness of the earlier work, and a new gaiety. The last movement, where the wind and the sea talk together, was finer still; it was like a drama of elements, it convinced the mind as well as the senses; it had deeper meaning than anything of Debussy's music which I have heard. The music was still, in a sense, imitative, but again it was not programme

music. What it aimed at was a representation, through the suggestion of sounds, of a mood of nature; and I can see no objection to the imitation on strings and harps of the swish and crying of waves, done as Debussy does it, in subordination to what I have called a mood of nature. There is none of the crude realism of Strauss in *Don Quixote* or of his sensationalism in *Salome;* there is suggestion, which passes, fluid as water, with the cadence of wind.

It is not easy, nor indeed very profitable, to compare the music of Debussy with any other contemporary or even earlier music. He stands alone, certainly the most individual and the most interesting and the most skilful of recent French composers. To compare him, as the brilliant and paradoxical Jean Marnold amuses himself by doing, with Beethoven and with Wagner; to look upon him as a great discoverer; to mistake his personal originality for any sort of 'music of the future,' is beside the question, an irrelevance of admiration. This music has the conscious and lovely eccentricities of Poe, the secret glitter in the jewels of Mallarmé, but it is not, so far as one can judge without having heard *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a large or powerful creation. It is a world of thin clouds, faint colours, a mysterious wood where birds sing, and there is twilight at noonday.

A magic circle surrounds the wood, and the wizard lives there, solitary with his phantoms. He is Merlin, and no Vivien has taught him to be human.

The face of Debussy has a singular likeness to the later portraits of Rossetti; there is the same brooding meditation in eyes and forehead. A certain heaviness of aspect is characteristic of most artists of extreme delicacy: Gautier, Renan, Pater, Maeterlinck, among writers. Languor was a part of their genius, and Debussy's music is defined beforehand in the first four lines of Verlaine's *Langueur*:

Je suis l'Empire à la fin de la décadence,
Qui regarde passer les grands Barbares blancs
En composant des acrostiches indolents
D'un style d'or ou la langueur du soleil danse.

Is not that miraculous in its anticipation of a music which is one golden web of indolent acrostics? There is the piano music attenuated, ingenious, made up of minute fairy sounds; there is the harp music, with its tiny throbbings; there are the songs, chosen perfectly from the best of Verlaine's and of Baudelaire's, and aiming at the same heights in the air, but with smaller wings. The very titles: *Pagodes*, *Jardins sous la pluie; Masques:* how they characterize the artificial paradise of this

music! *La Langueur du soleil* dances over it, through the leaves of the mysterious wood.

The wood, as I have said, is solitary; no human being enters it. The phantoms have unearthly voices; they express neither love nor hate, hardly desire; but for the most part dreams that have no outset nor conclusion, and when they are awake they play indolently at acrostics. Beardsley would have recognized his perverse elegance in these wandering outlines, in which sound plays pranks in the brain. He would have collected them in visible outlines, he would have shown them to us, in fancy dress, playing indolently at acrostics.

ELGAR AND REPRESENTATIVE MUSIC

*

THERE are two kinds of religious music, and no other. There is the Catholic, which, arising out of the abstract plain-song, remains always within bonds, follows always a certain ritual. Its origin is in the service of the Church, and it affects the mind as the architecture of cathedrals does. It is an actualizing of religion, and can become almost the equivalent of a dogma. The other kind of music is pure emotion, and can seem, from the religious point of view, a sort of heresy, as mysticism may do. But it may attain that ecstasy which the mediæval poets of the Church put into their verse, and may really express that joy which is more of a thank-offering than faith. Between these two kinds of music there is no other; everything else must be a compromise, and therefore in its way a failure. Even in form, music loses some of its privileges if it deserts the intelligible Mass for the meaningless Oratorio. The Oratorio is the attempt of Protestantism to bring about a reformation in music, and it suffers from the failure to see that art and doctrine are under separate laws. It is Handel who, by his personal genius, has fixed for composers, especially for English composers, a form which has neither the perfect proportions of the Mass nor the expressive liberty of the

drama. And so we find, in our days, the most serious, the most to be respected, of our composers, Sir Edward Elgar, choosing, for his most ambitious endeavour, a sort of oratorio form, in the setting of Cardinal Newman's poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*.

As it happens, the poem is by a Catholic, but the music is strictly Protestant, and in any case Newman is experimental in his very curious poem. There is a side on which it is almost morbid, and might be compared with the very different poem of Poe, *For Annie*, in which the sensations possible after death are indicated with a subtle suggestiveness. Newman, though he was a faultless prose-writer, can hardly be said, in so essential a way, to have been a poet. In *Gerontius* there is imagination, but it is hampered by reasoning, and the whole composition is not a creation, one and single, partly because it attempts to do the impossible, in that union of reasoning and imagination. This Catholic soul does not go so far into the future as the unchristened souls of those who in Shakespeare shiver on the verge of 'thrilling regions.' Is it a dogma that comes between the saint and the essential speech of the soul? Or is it merely that Newman, as a poet, could go so far and no further?

Great music, we all know, can be made out of

material, such as the librettists wrote for Mozart, of the most trivial and unhelping kind. But Sir Edward Elgar has set himself to do something which shall be on exactly the level of the poem, something which shall be English, and a worthy illustration of a worthy subject. In the subject indeed there are infinite possibilities, though when we find a singer who has a grave and expressive voice like Mr. Elwes trying to give musical value to

'I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion'

we realize over again what wisdom there was in the vague, rapturous words which Wagner discovered for the use of his music. The subject is finer than Schumann found in Byron's *Manfred*, but compare, here and there, the thrill which Schumann can give to his unearthly voices with the merely pleasant melodies to which Mme. Kirkby Lunn does so much more than justice! Take, again, the demons. They come in with would-be damnations out of Berlioz, but remain noisy intruders, without one unholy shiver in them. In the poem they are scarcely more impressive; they argue, and use violent speech; but compare them for a moment with the devil's speech of Beddoes in any of his plays or songs. Neither Berlioz nor

Beddoes was a supreme genius, but each could create certain individual things, and in Cardinal Newman and in Sir Edward Elgar we find no more than ineffectual attempts to do the same thing.

In the poem there are indeed touches of genius, but, closely as the music follows the verse, I cannot find in it any traces of equal inspiration. It is often literal where literalness is not an added grace, as in a sudden emphasis on the words 'the moment,' that they may indicate a crisis. But in what follows, the 'extremest speed,' which might have given wings to music, is neglected for a needless dwelling upon the mere statement of the 'Just and Holy Judge,' which is like the emphasis of a bad reader. A marvellous epithet, 'hideous purring,' given to the sound of wild beasts, which music could have caught up and carried further in its novel and terrible suggestion, is passed over. Tempting opportunities, afforded by 'chill at heart,' 'dampness on the brow,' are taken with a ready acquiescence in the first obvious musical physiology, while words like 'natural force,' which demand no physiology at all, are illustrated by sudden outbursts. The music is always most expressive when it is given to the chorus, and there is a big swaying movement in some of the invocations which has an impressiveness of its own.

No doubt there is no other English composer who could have carried through so serious an undertaking so capably. It has none of the triviality or theatricality of contemporary French attempts at religious music, and occasionally recalls Gounod only to its own advantage. But its appeal is, not to the purely musical nor to the purely religious mind, but to that typically English mind which is tinged not penetrated by religion, and likes its music on Sundays or of a Sunday kind. To this mind the vague solemnity which floats throughout the whole of *The Dream of Gerontius* will seem a very lofty thing. The vital distinction between the highest quality of talent and the least ingredient of genius is no more generally realized in music than in any other art. Yet only genius matters, not talent. If we are ever to take our place again among the nations in which music is a living thing, it will not be by music that stops short of genius, by however small an interval.

Sir Edward Elgar has obtained a deserved reputation, not only in England but abroad, as what is called our most 'representative' composer. His type is a characteristically English one, and one which foreigners are apt to agree with us in overrating, from our own point of view. To be sober, serious, competent, master of one's re-

sources, no trifler, not accidental, not wayward, not inspired, is to satisfy many of the requirements of the average English public. Not to be disconcerting is important. The man of genius is disconcerting, and it is a long time before he can ever seem, to his own generation, representative. *The Dream of Gerontius* has nothing in it that is essentially new; it has the misfortune to seem 'classical' from its birth. It is our representative music of the moment, our highest average, or a little above it.

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Someone who had met them at Christiania told me that Grieg and his wife were like two little old birds. Grieg, as we see him in his portraits, suggests a kind of gentle Nietzsche, dreaming. But Nietzsche has devouring eyes and a weak abrupt chin, while in Grieg the eyes and chin are alike vague.

Grieg's music is a small, dainty, homely, and perfect thing. Nothing that he did could be called big, and he is one more proof that to do great things it is not necessary that they should be big. His chief work, perhaps, is the incidental music which he wrote, at Ibsen's wish, for *Peer Gynt*, and it supplies Ibsen with that part of the poetry which he had left out of it. There are some choral works, a splendid pianoforte concerto (which should be heard as Mme. Carreño plays it), and three lovely violin sonatas, full of gaiety and vitality. And there are the songs, which are the perfume rather than the flower. They tell no secrets, but deepen the pathetic mystery which lies about human words. Lastly there are the little pianoforte pieces, which no one but Schumann had thought of doing in so many moods, with so much meditative quality under the song. They have no technical difficulties, a child could play them; but they require a certain touch, which is a rare thing to find among pianists.

Grieg has no desire to astonish, he seeks none of the new sonorities; he asks for expression, not for showy presentment. These little pieces are evocations of moods, gaiety, sadness, the curiosity of the senses half awake and half over the border of reality. They concentrate, as into a living folklore, the longings and memories of his nation; they have in them the whole contrasted Northern atmosphere, the seasons of light and of darkness envelop and possess them. They have in them the gnomes and household and hill goblins, with whatever else lonely people dream of among woods and fjords. A certain dulled murmur is never out of them, an unearthly accompaniment, like the murmur of summer insects, putting silence to music.

It is these small pieces and the songs, which have so much of their quality, that have become most widely known in England. Perhaps the rarest of them is the *Erotik*, a lovely and mysterious elegy, which d'Annunzio has chosen to interpret for himself in one of his novels. He sees in it, if I remember rightly, an old king in a purple bed. I am sure Grieg saw nothing of the sort, but I can understand why d'Annunzio was tempted to find words and a meaning in speech for a thing so inexplicable and haunting. The music almost speaks, and is like the dumb speech in the dog's eyes. There is in it a note of wonder, like the surprise of a naïve

creature coming suddenly upon death or some other great hidden reality. No music so naïve has been written in our time by any but a few Russians, and Grieg is often like a brooding child, while the Russian is a half-savage and half-civilized adult creature, who fumbles ignorantly after truth.

If anyone were at the pains to make a comparison between Grieg and his contemporaries, it might well be made with Tschaikowsky, though on the surface no two kinds of music could be more unlike. Tschaikowsky is all red fire and fever, Grieg is grey and gentle; but both have a genuine emotion to express, and they touch the heart, one by a sharp cry, the other by a shy caress. Both come to us in their music, though one troubles us and with the other there is no choosing between his joy and sadness.

And Grieg, like Tschaikowsky, comes to us with strange rhythms, that are themselves troubling when we first hear them. A rhythm like that of Anitra's dance in *Peer Gynt*, having once entered the ear, cannot be got out of it; but turns there like a refrain remembered, a refrain in Meredith: 'Make the bed for Attila!' Only the Russian and the Norwegian can pursue us with this persistence of sound, this unavoidable beat. The 'morning moods,' in that suite, have a movement, which undulates, pauses, and recurs with

so exact a capture of nature's actual way of beginning the day, that one seems rather to see than to hear it. In Ase's death (where Ibsen comes nearest, in the original, to becoming a poet) there is a heavy rhythm which, at once homely and holy, rocks the old woman to sleep with her son's lullaby. No other funeral march is so compassionate.

Grieg was no Ibsen or Björnson; he represented his country, as the phase is, in a narrower, perhaps a more essential way. Neither of them was so much of a poet, nor yet so near to the gnomes. In Grieg there is often a repressed or hidden queerness, which is always coming up out of the soil in Norwegian folk-lore. His tunes, which at times come near to being no more than petty, are at least never, as Tschaikowsky's can at times become, turned to mere 'favour and prettiness.' Compare the *Casse-noisette* suite with *Peer Gynt*, and, as serious music, where is the phantasmagoria beside this piece of earth under the clouds? You may say it is not meant to be serious, and remind me of the incidental music to *Hamlet*. Well, even that, with its tremendous effectiveness, its real fineness, misses something of what comes unexpectedly into Grieg's music, and comes from one knows not where.

It is difficult not to ask oneself sometimes why this rare, humble, and unaffected artist, in whom

there is mere nature and a natural art, should have come into so wide a general esteem, that he takes the place in our drawing-rooms which was once occupied by Mendelssohn. Is it not for some of the same reasons which have made our modern English Sullivan the delight of the crowd? Sullivan wrote for the crowd, as his librettist did, and with an art not less agile and more intrinsic. He had a marvellous gift of making gay and pleasant tunes, and he turned a serious talent to the purposes of an entertainment. He did it with natural gusto, and he made a thing like the very best *vers de société*, perfectly genuine of its kind. The kind happened to suit exactly the English public, which has, as I have pointed out, an ear rather than a taste for music. Grieg, with a genius of a far deeper kind than Sullivan's exquisite talent, had the same simple way of enjoying himself in his music, and of reflecting that enjoyment quite simply upon those who heard it. The prompt quality of giving pleasure made it, as music, neither better nor worse. A flower is neither better nor worse than a tree; it differs in its form of beauty. But you can pluck a flower and take it home with you, or have it growing at home in a flower-pot; while you must go out into a field to find and admire your tree. Grieg's music was a flower that all could pluck.

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In an essay on Beethoven I once defined musical programmes as, 'at the best, misleading footnotes to a misinterpreted text,' and, after reading Dr. Niecks' learned, enthusiastic and ingenious attempt to prove that most of the best music is really programme music, I am of the same opinion as I was. This immense book, *Programme Music in the Last Four Centuries*, is filled with information of many curious kinds, and it tells us incidentally a great deal about music, and 'musical expression.' The very error on which it is founded gives it the merit of being almost a history of music in brief. And too much praise cannot be given to the care with which the actual sayings and writings of composers themselves, on their own intentions and on what they consider should be done in music, have been gathered together and set in a convenient and significant order. There is use, after all, in knowing even the mistake that an artist makes as to what he is really doing. And, not unfrequently, we get in the clear view of an artist not great enough to carry out what he saw a suggestion or even in its way a correction of some greater work, done by mere instinct of genius.

Thus, Dr. Niecks quotes an obscure eighteenth-century composer, François Dandrieu, who says of

the titles which he has put to his compositions: 'I have drawn them from the character of the pieces which they denote.' Could anything be more reasonable? But here is Dr. Niecks assuring us that it is 'preposterous' to say 'that the composer gives in his music all that is set forth in the programme, whereas in reality the music is intended only as a commentary and illustration, not as a duplicate or translation of it. Indeed, the programme would be a superfluity if it did not contain something that music is unable to express at all or equally well.' But indeed the programme is a superfluity, for the reason that it can tell nothing of importance to the proper understanding of music which that music cannot say for itself, only in another language. I say 'nothing of importance,' for I cannot consider it to be of importance to music to be able to 'reason, give orders, and tell stories,' which, it seems, is to be the business of the programme. If the music attempts to express something which is detailed in the programme, and fails to give a musical rendering of what is essential in it, then programme and music will be alike useless, for the music which can be outdone by words is bad music; whereas if the music does render the essence of that which the programme states in words, of what use is the addition of verbal details, which at the best will distract and

at the worst bewilder? It is perfectly true that music cannot 'reason, give orders, and tell stories.' Well, the business of music is to do none of these things, but, as Schopenhauer has said, 'to speak the highest wisdom in a language the reason does not understand.' When Dr. Niecks professes to consider music as a mere 'commentary and illustration' of what can be fully stated in words in the form of a programme, and when he finds in Beethoven 'the chief founder and greatest cultivator of programme music,' and even in Bach 'a clandestine cultivator of programme music,' it is evident that he fails to realize the whole of that fundamental difference which separates the 'jumping frogs and buzzing midges' of Handel from the fact that Beethoven, when he was writing the *adagio* of the string quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1, 'thought of Romeo and Juliet in the tomb scene.'

That thoughts or recollections which were in Beethoven's mind at a given moment should turn, through some unknown crucible of the brain, into some part of the constituents of a piece of music, is in the nature of things; and it will not make the slightest difference to the quality of the music if we associate with it the death-scene of Romeo and Juliet or if we do not. If Beethoven cares to pass on to us the hint which came to him, and

which would have been worthless to anyone but to him, we may possibly, if we are very dull, listen to this music with a sympathy perhaps a little more intelligent. But what we have always to remember is what Wagner said so clearly in writing of Beethoven: that whatever may be the external cause which sets a mood in motion, that mood, at the moment of creative inspiration, will have already turned to music, and that which set it in motion will have been forgotten. The aim of what is in a literal sense programme music is an aim not only to perpetuate that external cause which may have set it in motion, but to trouble the mind of the hearer with, it may be, no worse tidings than that, as in a Carnival set of Couperin, it is now 'the Kind Cuckoos under Yellow Dominos' who are passing; but it may be, with Dussek, that we are attending 'a complete and exact delineation of the ceremony from St. James' to St. Paul's.'

Where Dr. Niecks seems to be wrong is in the foundation of his theory; but in his development of it he is able to give us infinite delight and instruction. He shows us the programme already in use in the sixteenth century, and as we read him we realize that the conditions of music have not changed, and that from the beginning any musician could render the sounds of the barnyard

and no one could render the thought of a man. Strauss has invented nothing but a more elaborate technique: his descending major seventh, stringing Till Eulenspiegel to the gibbet, is neither better nor worse, as idea in music, than Kuhnau's 'rapid scale and some twirls' which depict 'the pebble is sent by means of the sling into the forehead of the giant.' Beethoven used a natural detail or two out of the note-book where he noted sounds, and his Pastoral Symphony is none the worse for them, and none the better. The programme has always existed and has never brought music nearer to the power of human speech; if it ever succeeded in doing so, it would be to the disaster of music itself. How many lovers of music, like Dr. Niecks in this learned and enthusiastic book, filled with so much criticism absolutely just and subtle in itself, have tried to degrade music by putting it in what Gluck called its true position, as a support to poetry, or to no matter what scheme of words! That is to limit a thing almost as unbounded as sea or air, and to make it as solid as the earth. It is because the doctrine of programme music is a degradation to music that it should be protested against as a heresy.

There are certain sounds in nature which music can, at its peril, express. Where music

merely imitates, it is no higher as an art than mere imitation in poetry or painting. Realism is to music the same abandonment of privilege as to the other arts. Where music is out of its proper place is in that middle region where, as Dr. Niecks says, people reason and tell stories. Literature occupies itself with that region, and painting; though both can deal with rarer material. But it is the blessing and praise of music that it is shut out from the very possibility of communicating the non-essential things which go to the making of so much in the other arts. How much Beethoven gains, how little really he loses, in his rendering of what is elemental in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*! Dr. Niecks would call that overture programme music, but there is no 'commentary or illustration' in it; it is a creation over again, on no more than a hint from Shakespeare, and on a level with him.

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From a democratic point of view the Promenade Concerts are one of our finest institutions. Here, for a shilling, you can have three hours of the best music; you can sit or stand or walk or smoke through it; only the beer is lacking to make it quite German. Nothing else in London is so informal, so readily hospitable, in its wholly serious entertainment; and the audience responds to the welcome. When I was there, on a Wagner night, the streets were drowned in rain; the atmosphere, outside, was hot and wet; inside, in the midst of the crowd and smoke, I seemed to be listening to heavenly music from the depths of a bottomless pit. There was not a breath of air; one stifled, and tried to forget the discomfort; and curiously, on the whole, succeeded. Vernon Lee has told somewhere the story of the marvellous effects of Wagner on a headache: it may be proved any night at the Queen's Hall. One does, after a time, succumb to what is a kind of hypnotism; the sound seems almost to clear the air, or at least to lull one into a kind of dream in which only the sense of hearing exists. And, looking about me, I saw that the audience which had been lured on this night into every inch and corner of the hall was the most heterogeneous audience I had ever seen in London. I saw some specimen of every age and

class; aged ladies, sitting bowed over patiently in the few uncomfortable seats of the arena with their backs to the orchestra, profiles of young girls, heads of musicians, half-castes, the anachronism of evening clothes among straw hats and Jaeger jackets, eager and indifferent faces flung together indistinguishably; all the London of motor-cars and penny omnibuses clustered in one heap and for one purpose: to hear good music cheap.

The benefit, when you have subtracted the whole counter account, is immense, and, in London, unique. You will find that the Mondays are given to Wagner, the Fridays to Beethoven, and that the other days are divided between 'classic' and modern music, chosen with skill among what is excellent and can yet be popular. Only a few years ago Tschaikowsky had almost whole nights to himself: now he is merely sprinkled between Saint-Saëns and Sibelius. Sibelius is the new name that occurs oftenest; and the Frenchmen begin to force their way in, Debussy at the head of them, though still limited to his *Après-midi d'un faune*.

And, just as Tschaikowsky has receded, so Strauss has almost dropped out. Sixty concerts with only four Strauss numbers would have been impossible. Is this in any serious sense

an indication of how little hold Strauss has really taken on the English public? I think it is, for the Promenade Concerts could not, and do not, disregard what they take to be the popular demand. Tschaikowsky has had many years of popularity with us, and it means little that that popularity should begin to slacken. But Strauss came suddenly and would seem to have gone as suddenly. When, the other night, Mr. Wood conducted *Till Eulenspiegel*, I was convinced that it was through no personal choice of his that Strauss is to be given so rarely. He conducted it with the gusto of real enjoyment; he entered into the composer's intentions with an admiring sympathy; it was played so effectively that every crackle of the loud German joke could be heard. *Till Eulenspiegel* is Punch and Judy in a German adaptation, on the lines of Stuck or Klinger; and, coming after Wagner, it sounded like the noisy mischievous voice of a schoolboy, interrupting the master. It is lamentable that Strauss should always make us think how clever he is, and *Till* is as clever as Mr. Rackham; but no one thinks Conder clever, or Wagner.

And so, in some intuitive way, it may be, the public has come to realize that Strauss is not the universal genius whom our critics followed and outdid the German critics in trumpeting, but a

brilliant technician, who can dazzle but not convince. It was the emotion, the fever in the blood, that gave Tschaikowsky so much of his appeal, and in Strauss there is a fever of the brain which shivers, does not burn. It was evident, even through the first enthusiasm, that this brilliant and empty music could never take a firm hold on those to whom music was a warm, living thing.

In the old days the concerts were divided into two halves, the good music and the bad; and, if you liked, you could go out before the bad came. That has been changed, and it is no doubt for the good of the majority. That majority has now indeed hardly anything but good music to choose from. The fact is surprising and delightful. On the Wagner night there were indeed, almost at the end, two songs, with unpardonable encores, and I could hear, from the outer edge of the entrance-hall where I waited, the thunder of applause that told me I could come back. This irrelevancy is slight, and allows a breathing-space, and is not to be condemned out of kindness for the people who find it a relief after Wagner.

It was for Wagner, there can be little doubt, that most of these people had come. The fascination of Wagner may be set down to many causes, but at least it exists and is for the most part irresistible. It was perhaps the *Tannhäuser*

music which was most appreciated; and nothing was so well given by Mr. Wood, who is most at home in wholly romantic music. The *Tristan* is of course inconceivably greater, and the audience was genuine in its response to so certain a magic. But the music out of the *Götterdämmerung*, though it was the Rhine-maidens', seemed to have lost some of the watery wonder which had enveloped it when Richter gave it at the Opera; and the *Parsifal* music, though it was the Flower-maidens', seemed to have lost still more by being given anywhere but at Bayreuth. Wagner was no doubt right in wishing it to be heard only as part of a spectacle, for though the music is some of the rarest and subtlest that he wrote, it needs, more than anything else in his work, to be not only heard, but, in a sense, seen.

I wonder why the people that I saw at the Queen's Hall on that stormy night in August could have come from every suburb of London to hear a concert almost wholly orchestral, and almost wholly made up of Wagner's music? That they do so now may be due in part to directors and managers, who have done much, of a business kind; but it is certainly due in great part to the most vital of English conductors, Mr. Henry Wood. No one else among us has known, as he has, how to catch the public and yet not

stoop to the public. He has worked always in the right direction, and his force has in it a kind of animal magnetism. He loves the good things, and is on the watch for new things. His conducting is never cold or listless, he has the knack of making everything seem interesting. Few people have done more for music in London, or brought it nearer to those who love it disinterestedly.

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Can Wagner be heard properly anywhere but at Bayreuth or Munich? Can he be heard even at Munich as he is heard at Bayreuth? In a certain sense, no. The conditions at Bayreuth are perfect, not only because of a theatre designed after Wagner's pattern, for that we have now got at Munich, but because Bayreuth is a little provincial place in the midst of pine-woods, where the religious-minded can go into retreat, and be disturbed by nothing in the world. That we should have, here in London, the whole cycle of *The Ring*, given in full, is a privilege for those who live in London, for which we cannot be too grateful to the authorities of Covent Garden. But the conditions of London life in the season make the privilege a diminished one, if we compare it with the immense satisfaction of Bayreuth. Here we have to get in our Wagner between two theatres, a dinner, a ball, every kind of daily and nightly engagement. We come tired to our seats, we listen restlessly, we have to hustle through our dressing and dining, our coming and going. It is impossible for us to compose our minds as we can compose them at Bayreuth, where there is nothing to do but stroll in the quiet streets, and up and down the paths in the wood, all day long, with the music always awaiting us, like a sacred ritual

at which we are to assist. It is mentally and physically fatiguing to hear *The Ring* from beginning to end, under no matter what conditions; but how hard those conditions inevitably are in London!

In the performances at Covent Garden we have to take into consideration the actual difficulties and disabilities of London. How can we expect the true atmosphere of Wagner at a theatre when there is so little of that atmosphere anywhere in London, and especially at the hurried, crowded, and exacting period of the season? Yet for one thing we have good reason to be grateful. We have Richter as conductor, and in him we have the greatest living conductor, and almost, in a special sense, Wagner's representative. I personally would give the best singers, the best staging, perhaps even the pine-woods of Bayreuth, in exchange for Richter as a conductor. It is for the music, after all, that we go to hear Wagner; and the music only exists through the little white magic wand which the enchanter of the orchestra holds in his hand. Richter reminds me of Rodin, as he sits there, a little bent, hardly moving, heavy and aloof, drawing fire or thunder out of the 'hollow gulf' before him at a lifting, not only of the bâton, but of a finger, an eyelid. He is not of an absolute evenness and quality,

and, like Sarah Bernhardt, will sometimes go through his part indifferently. But his average, not only his best, is beyond the reach of any other conductor, and throughout the second cycle, which I attended, he was never below his splendid average, and several times at his very best. What is it in him that brings the very secret of Wagner out of these harmonies that can be so easily betrayed by the way? I suppose genius first of all, and then every technical quality that can actualize genius. Anyone who has ever seen him at rehearsal will have noticed that not one shade of sound will escape him in a torrent or tempest of sounds. He has the immense quietude of the greatest men, in whom emotion is Caliban and Ariel at once, and both in servitude. He masters, and is never mastered, and it is with a thrill of surprise and pleasure that we see him as he unchains the elements in Wagner's universe, effortless in their midst, directing them, a more effectual Wotan.

To praise an orchestra is to praise a conductor; and to say that the orchestra did justice to the music is partly saying that Richter gave them the inspiration without which they could not have done it. I shall never forget hearing German opera done under Mancinelli, in the old days that are, I hope, happily past. It was like the Italian band

on the Pincio that used to play Weber and Wagner when Siegfried Wagner was in Rome. You can take every fine shade out of the greatest German music by forcing your orchestra to play it as if it were Italian music, all noise, smoothly rolling rhythms, and emphasis series by series. Even Wagner can be played like that, or could have been once.

I am not sure that *The Ring* is in every way Wagner's finest, though I suppose it must be called his greatest, achievement; just as that other *Ring*, *The Ring and the Book* of Browning, overtops all the rest of the work in bigness. *Tristan* for sheer passion, the *Meistersinger* for sheer music, each as a whole exceeds the never quite controlled bulk of this myth of the Nibelungen, in which Wagner has tried to be, and almost succeeded in being, primeval, a maker and fellow of gods, giants, and dragons. So lofty a language was never spoken in music, with so much in it of human speech carried upward and downward, not distorted by empty vain sublimities, but exaggerated in the true manner of art, on the central human pattern. Things like the fire-music, the wood-music, the love-duets of Siegmund and of Siegfried, are of course among the great things in which Wagner is simply excelling other people on their own ground. But there

are many parts into which a purely German grotesque finds its way, uncouthnesses, experiments in imitation and suggestion, which only supreme genius could excuse, by transcending, as Wagner does, what is accidental in them by what is essential. The justification of the taps on the anvil, the clop-clop of uneven legs, the ugly tumult, uneasy horror, and all that might easily have been intrusive in a piece of pure music, is precisely this: that the music never suffers by it, and can be heard in the concert-room with perfect satisfaction, though inquiring minds may wonder at it there. If they are rightly in tune, their wonder will not hinder their delight.

Of the two series of *The Ring* which have been given I attended the second. There were many variations from the cast of the first. The general level was extremely high, though there were no surprises for us. And what Brünnhilde could ever make up for the absence of Ternina? She is a woman of Richter's own calibre, a great singer, an almost greater actress. She is among the singers I have heard in Wagner whom I shall never forget: Ternina first of all, then Jean de Reszke as Tristan, and, for a strange, big, youthful quality of his own, Alvary as Siegfried. The Siegfried now at Covent Garden, Herr Kraus, has delighted the audiences by something vigorous

and spontaneous in his manner and by his rendering of the great scenes. His voice, in the middle register, is almost toneless; yet, especially in the last scenes of the *Götterdämmerung*, he gave the ecstasy of the part with real feeling, force, and dignity. Mme. Gulbranson is not a wholly satisfying Brünnhilde, and her voice was wearied before the end; but her general conception of the part, though without subtlety, was good, and there was beauty and tenderness in her rendering. She did not give us the whole 'wonder and wild desire' of the character, and in the great scene of the awakening in *Die Walküre*, one missed the superb acting of Ternina, which gave a meaning to every pause and gesture. Mme. Kirkby Lunn, who plays several parts, has a lovely, grave, and passionate voice which is a delight to hear, whether as Erda or as Waltraute. She fills each part with all its beauty and meaning, and her voice cries among the instruments, as I think all voices should, as if it were one of them. There was fine character singing in most of the minor parts; Loge, Mime, Alberich, all were good; and the vast festal voice of Van Rooy made even the more tedious utterances of Wotan and the Wanderer beautiful in themselves, and certainly the 'large utterance of the early gods.'

It cannot be objected that the Covent Garden

staging is not done on the Wagner tradition. But is it not time that that tradition should be modified, if not finally abandoned? Is it a necessary part of a beautiful staging of Wagner? I do not think it is, or that the toy horses of the Walkyries have any need of existence; and I am not even sure that the dear accustomed Fafner, the dragon who becomes more elegant and sympathetic every year, need be seen quite so explicitly. Wagner carried the principle of realism to its last limits, and the time of realism is, I hope, passing. Are there not new possibilities of staging these operas in a way that has never been attempted? Might not the music be helped, rather than hindered, by a *décor* and by costumes in which only illusion, and the furthering of the mystery of the music, should be aimed at?

NIETZSCHE'S APOSTASY IN MUSIC

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THE story of that transmutation, by which Nietzsche, having had a certain instinct for music, perverted it by reasonings, prepossessions, and the revenge of the nerves, so that he made and unmade a Wagner after his own image, has some interest in the telling of a French critic, M. Lasserre, in his book on *Les Idées de Nitzsche sur la musique*. It is true that he has a decided preference for the opinions contained in the petulances of later years rather than for the young and sane exuberance of the 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' period of *The Origin of Tragedy*. In that, which is the most complete in itself of all Nietzsche's books, we get the first announcement of the new gospel, in what was not long to continue to be its particular form of message. M. Lasserre is not satisfied with what seems to him so vague an enthusiasm, though he tells us that he has confined his criticisms to *thèses d'esthétique musicale*. But he has a confident tendency towards what he calls disentangling truth from error, in the ideas of Schopenhauer, for instance, who has obtained, he thinks, *un crédit esthétique beaucoup trop grand*, or in the ideas of Nietzsche himself. He admires only what he considers 'classical' art, and finds in modern music *cette barbarie contre laquelle proteste l'art classique*.

With a proper caution against 'realism,' he asks, as he reports a fine frenzy out of the early Nietzsche, in what manner true and living dramatic inventions *se résoudront-elles en des rêves*? Music, to him, can be scarcely nearer to a dream, without passing into indefiniteness. And he addresses his book primarily to those who partake his conviction *sur le profond désarroi doctrinal où l'influence à la fois féconde et perturbatrice de Wagner a jeté la musique*. His best service, then, and all that we need consider in him, is his really useful bringing together, into some sort of order, of the scattered and conflicting theories of Nietzsche relating to music, and especially to the music of Wagner, which are not easily to be found in various parts of his work.

In *The Origin of Tragedy* Nietzsche is on the side of what is eternal art; he announces, in a new way and with new examples, eternal truths. He has found in Schopenhauer, as Wagner did, the first theorist to understand and declare what was really the essence of music. Schopenhauer has said the first and best things about that power of direct speech, deeper than any words, by which music can express what is most essential in humanity, the supreme emotions. Nietzsche saw in Wagner's music a new energy of life which was what he was then demanding of art, and he set up a pedestal

for him, as the new 'super-man.' The name he had not yet borrowed from Goethe, nor had the idea yet become so personal. He assured us later that whenever he praised Wagner he was praising himself, not having yet found the mask of Zarathustra. Private notes of the period have been found and published, in which we see harsh comments on the very characteristics of Wagner which he is praising in print. Why should these be more than the crying of that critical voice always alive and biting in Nietzsche, though for the moment in subjection? From the first, probably, Nietzsche was not genuinely musical enough really quite to like or wholly understand what was new and strange in Wagner, so that he can write down: 'The mad thought has often come into my mind: has Wagner the musical gift?' There we see the theorist, as yet only partly conscious of himself, who is to come to the conclusion, as M. Lasserre expresses it (with approval) that his mistress has betrayed him: *La musique, maîtresse qui ne l'a trompé que parce qu'il la prénait pour ce qu'elle n'était pas.*

But it is just here that Nietzsche turns his back on his faith, fancying that he has gone, in the right direction, beyond it. In an admirable article on M. Lasserre's book in the *Mercure de France*, one of the most original of French musical critics, M.

Jean Marnold, comments on Nietzsche's strange later confidence in words, so that he takes 'dissonance,' for instance, not as a 'mystery of sensation' to brood over, but 'as if it had been presented to him.' *Carmen* seems to obey laws that are broken in *Tristan*, and all the old 'classical' barricades are set up again. Morality, even, is brought in to condemn the excesses of sound, and Wagner, who was to have been the 'super-man,' becomes a kind of Don Juan of music, a type of decadence. M. Lasserre shows us, without shame, the *volte-face*, in a telling illustration. In *The Origin of Tragedy* there is a passage on the third act of *Tristan* which renders with precise accuracy what Wagner had meant to do, and had done, in the music. M. Lasserre quotes it, and then reminds us that the day will come when Nietzsche will use these same words, ecstasy, illusion, and the like, to represent the exact opposite of the meaning which he first gave to them, and which was their true meaning. What the musical instinct, guided by Schopenhauer, was ready to divine at sight or hearing, it is the angry philosopher who denies and distorts, reasoning himself out of his instinct.

It was as an actor that Nietzsche finally came to see Wagner, and it seemed to him that as an actor he imitated man only in the paroxysms of his

passion. This he calls 'dragging music into the service of the naturalistic violence of passion.' Tannhäuser is shown to us in 'a series of ecstatic states'; and it is with a sigh of moral disgust that he cries: 'Intoxicate and seize the senses, excite to ecstasy, violently startle, at all costs thrill the sensibility: frightful tendencies!' So the classicists, the moralists, once said, and here we see Nietzsche on their side, forgetting Dionysus, and what symbolic drunkenness had once been revealed to him to be. Is it a petulance, a prejudice, a form of anger? All these, perhaps, but so far as it is a conviction, it indicates the danger of the philosopher when he concerns himself too closely with an art not his own.

Nietzsche, the most original thinker of our age, whose thoughts came to him in snatches, was concerned for the most part with problems of man, the creature as he is to be seen in the herd and on an occasional mountain-top. Take the book which has at last been translated, and admirably, into English, *Beyond Good and Evil*, a book which is full of magnificent speech, as straight as Whitman's or Carlyle's, but more brilliant, more modern, more cutting than theirs; a book in which ideas are tumbled together, in a dazzling confusion; one of the most vital of books; and look here and there at the criticism, which comes in by the

way, mostly criticism of literature, and sometimes as inevitable as this on Petronius, 'who, more than any great musician hitherto, was a master of *presto* in invention, ideas, and words.' In regard to music, he says in passing the right thing, which no one else has ever said, on Schumann, with 'his taste, which was fundamentally a *petty* taste (that is to say, a dangerous propensity) – doubly dangerous among Germans – for quiet lyricism and intoxication of the feelings,' Schumann 'merely a *German* event in music. But he must sweep aside all Romantic music, all music since Beethoven, because it was 'not noble enough': so far we follow him; but he adds: 'because it was not musical enough.' Does this really mean that it was not 'classical' music? Has he come to think that music can only be satisfying if it is 'the South in music,' which he felt, rightly enough, in Bizet, whose French march-tunes sound, heard in the streets of Madrid, like the voice of modern Spain itself? Here is indeed the lamentable theorizing of the philosopher who will no longer allow himself to recognize that music is music, and not a tendency nor a tradition. He thinks that he has found out Wagner, because it seems to him that he is speaking a theatre-speech, 'the speech of the souls of different musicians.' He no longer hears the sonorities of *Tristan*, nor feels the passion in them,

nor finds this divine music 'musical enough.' And all that he has to say now about music is valueless, because he has ceased to hear it for its own sake, disinterestedly.

NOTES ON RICHARD STRAUSS AND BEETHOVEN

*

In an essay of mine entitled *The Problem of Richard Strauss*, I used this motto of Alfred de Vigny: *Je ne puis trop admirer un homme qui trouve à une symphonie le défaut d'être trop Cartésienne, et à une autre de pencher vers le système de Spinosa*. I pointed out the fundamental fallacy of Strauss's attempt 'to convey an idea in music' – a fallacy stated nakedly by the composer. For the name of Nietzsche – the music being labelled 'nach Nietzsche' – substitute the name of Calvin; say that you represent the babes (his hideous idea!) a span long, suffering in hell, and the just made perfect in heaven; the notes, so far as they are capable of conveying a definite idea, could remain as appropriate to the one as to the other.

The first thing I ever heard of Strauss was his *Don Juan*, and it puzzled me, as the problem of his music has always puzzled so many of his admirers. It had ideas, and it rendered sensations. But were these ideas very profound, very sincere, very personal? And were those sensations really musical sensations? Strauss gives a quotation from Lenau at the beginning of this score, and from this we know that we have to expect two motives: the motive of passion and the motive of loneliness.

Knowing this, I felt the passion and the loneliness in the music. But when I had come away, and all the notes of the music had evaporated like bubbles, I began to wonder whether I had only felt them in a literary way, whether I had not put them for myself into a certainly somewhat formless mass which the composer had handed over to me, perhaps for my own shaping. The music was not wholly a new thing; it reminded me of both Wagner and Tschaikowsky; though it had more of the wind of the Russian than of the waves of the German. And, what was distressing, it reminded me sometimes of *L'Enfant prodigue*, one nervous thrill following another in a merely clever imitation of natural things. That emphatic, heavy-handed way with the orchestra: was it masterly, or was it the wrong kind of emphasis, the mere point and pungency of antithesis? Of one thing I am certain in regard to Strauss: that he is not a man of genius.

Till Eulenspiegel is meant to be a musical joke; only Strauss turns the occasional savour into the main substance of the dish, like those Russian dishes indexed on the menu by their sauces: that is to say, the exact dishes with the exact sauces I took at every meal when I was in Moscow. Here an orchestra is divided against itself, playing its own joke in its own corner; most of the time his harmony is like the sound of something tearing.

There are astounding effects of sound, but never for their own sakes as music: means to an end. And surely all this tearing apart, for emphasis, is the sin of all modern German art? Then there is also the commonness which always goes with this emphasis; and in this music a formidable talent for a low kind of grotesque; in which I felt that there was not one spark of inspiration; but that it was all made of wheels within wheels, which creaked noisily, turning nothing.

Then think of *Zarathustra*, and of how soon, after the touch of inspiration in the beginning, it passes into the dry and academical! If these dry things mean something profound, it is not anything profoundly musical. In a word: 'groaning which cannot be uttered' defines its meaning. Were it not for the programme – always to me a hateful interference between one's hearing and the sound of the orchestra – one might call it dry scholasticism. Can this be the vital thunder and spring, can this be the dance, of Zarathustra? It is not so that I read his book. Rather, I imagine, the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven would speak – would deliver wonderfully – his meaning. This dismal gospel drones; this uneasy pessimist, forever struggling with a bad dream.

No one has ever shown how noise can be learned and ingenious without being vital or beautiful; or

how the striving after an articulate voice strikes it speechless. All the divine voice, which is song, fades away in this speech which says nothing intelligible; this noise is not vital noise but cloudy noise; and its nearest approach to joy is in a kind of huge parody of the Wagnerian fever, through which whirl Italian snatches, masquerading in fancy dress. And, after all, nothing has been said with incomparable expenditure of energy, an unprecedented emphasis; which I fail to find in the splendid theatrical music of the *Feuersnot* love-scene, that has a kind of Rossini effect. What is unquestionably the fact of the matter is, that in the greater part of the music of Strauss the orchestra jokes after the approved German fashion, *chimera bombinans in vacuo*. If only Richard Strauss had taken the trouble to take to heart this magnificent and monstrous phrase of Rabelais, he might have spun less monstrous webs out of his intricate spider's intellect; only, he is what the French call *un cérébral*.

Don Quixote of Cervantes is the work of a man of genius who created only this masterpiece. It was owing to their curiously similar sense for 'standing by' while the game was being played that Cervantes and Shakespeare developed the full scope of their genius without moving out of the plane of dignity. This creation of the Spaniard has its

place beside the creations of Rabelais, of Aristophanes: it is as unique in its own way as *The Clouds*, *Hamlet*, *Gargantua*. It not only dominates fiction; it has infinite variety, an unsurpassed invention both in Tragedy and in Comedy. To the Knight whose madness simply annihilates Time and Space and changes the aspect of the Universe, Sancho Panza is the humorous counterpart, who saves him from many misadventures, being always courteous, self-seeking and, in a word, invaluable.

Now turn to the *Don Quixote* of Strauss, and you will see the composer's impotent fancy spurring itself on to what it cannot achieve. The whole thing is a piece of vast delusion, if what is so petty can be called in any sense vast. Here indeed is the battle with the windmill, and the barber's basin – the journey through the air is indicated by a species of churning-machine; he worries Cervantes' text as the commentators of Shakespeare do: not a word escapes him, he would set commas to the music. He gives none of the madness nor of the dignity with which the 'unfortunate knight' endures them. It is all the commentary of the ingenious student – like one of the most literal and allegorical of the schoolmen at his task of illustrating the Bible.

In *Macbeth* the metaphysical hero-villain is shown with a scholastic dryness, struggling with

Italian outbursts; there are new crescendoes and a heavy emphasis on the air; the music is dull; Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is not: this quotation might be applied: it is indeed 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' So, as we must return to *Zarathustra*, there is no ecstasy, no dignity, no pride; but a heavy fumbling after keys in the dark, without unlocking anything. Had he but read those stanzas of Baudelaire, he might have given one a sense – which he does not – of absolute horror, of the agonies of the damned:

Un malheureux ensorcelé
Dans ses tâtonnements futiles
Pour fuir d'un lieu plein de reptiles,
Cherchant la lumière et la clé;

Un damné descendant sans lampe
Au bord d'un gouffre dont l'odeur
Trahit l'humide profondeur
D'éternels escaliers sans rampe.

The *Burlesque* for orchestra and piano is a piece of hard, technical skill, as dry as the dryest fugue; wholly mechanical; music written for music's sake just as obvious and exterior as that written for the sake of poetic ideas; and, as always, without vital growth; a mere school exercise. In *Guntram*, the Prelude is a Wagner Prelude (imagine for a moment the Prelude of *Parsifal*) with all that

makes Wagner Wagner left out. It is always hesitating round some motive of Wagner, which it begins and then deliberately turns aside from: as in these empty husks of sound which drop into triviality and eccentricity.

2

When Beethoven becomes sublime, it is the sublime, not in action but in being. Some new epithet must be invented for this music which narrates nothing, yet is epic, sings no articulate message, yet is lyric; moves to no distinguishing action, yet is already awake in the void waters out of which a world is to awaken.

In his first orchestral work, the *First Symphony* in C Major, *Op.* 31, the music is made for the sake of music, with its frequent beauty; form mastered before there is anything to be said. The gay *minuet* is the first of the laughing series. Think, after this, of the *Overture to Egmont*, *Op.* 84 (1810), where at once the meaning has come into music; a more than human voice begins singing and lamenting, with a profound musical depth of appropriate beauty. In its large and solemn dignity, its dramatic sense, its sense of being filled by the breath of Goethe's inspiration, he equals it and surpasses it in a creation from the same subject.

In the *Symphony No.* 2, *Op.* 36 (1802), comes,

together with Beethoven's individuality, a Beethoven growing into his real self, with touches of unearthly beauty and a certain new poignancy. In this begins that stealthy and mysterious entrance of one knows not what unexpected guests, with mysterious pauses and questionings. In the third, the *Eroica*, *Op.* 55, Beethoven becomes fully great, his whole complex life at its vitality; here is music which has his energy and 'the supreme grace.' The *Funeral March* is certainly for a hero, who is praised rather than lamented in his death. It has vastness rather than intensity. There are no cries, 'nothing is here to weep,' the throb is new in music, this last, this vital throb. In the *Scherzo* there is force in gaiety: always the same atmosphere, Beethoven's greatness.

The *Fourth Symphony*, *Op.* 60 (1816), has much more subtle instrumentation which strikes one at once in this profound and lovely introduction which leads to the splendid *Allegro*, with its immense male energy; it is the beginning of the subtlest form of Beethoven's melody. Beethoven never reached this point before: the whole musical subtlety, its rarities, at last nervous. In the *Adagio* there is a religious sweetness, with which just a drop of poignancy is found. Beethoven beatifies rapture; as in the melting and fiercely orchestral colours; an instrumentation which had never been

before, and used wholly as the subtlest and therefore closest means of expression. At times one might also use this phrase of Crashaw: 'honeyed drops of sound,' or 'those tumultuous shops of noise.'

The *Fifth Symphony*, *Op.* 67 (1805), is stupendous. It begins with the *Allegro con brio*, wringing all its fierce stabbing meaning out of it. No mortal orchestra can give all that one divines in the composer's intention; I have never heard an interpretation so poignant and so arresting as Richter's. The intensity never slackened, yet it was continually different; all the shades of this demoniac onslaught of sound upon the limits of Time and the ramparts of the world (Lucretius' famous Latin phrase) seem almost to shatter one's nerves. Then comes the martial peace of the *Andante*, with its vast sky.

The conductor's reading of the *Scherzo* taught me many things in a movement which I thought I knew. He gives you *forte* when *forte* is meant, and *piano* which is *piano*. Every bar becomes clear; one sees its meaning from the sympathetic precision with which a note is given its exact meaning. There was a splendid reading of the attack on the *Allegro*, with its level and terrifying height of flame – and the fire never abated to the end in that prolonged crescendo.

In the *Seventh Symphony, Op.* 22 (1812), there is the extraordinary mastery of his material – of pure music, meaning nothing but the eternal, disembodied meaning of the notes; sometimes almost severe, and with a kind of fierceness in its huge dance. What astonishing harmonies in this enormous creation, with its huge crescendoes and surges and plunges of depths beyond depths and of heights above heights!

In the *Allegretto* I seem to hear the lovely colours of the 'cellos; then the great monotony, with the two intermingled and fused in one; and the reiterance of those few notes, with its queer and lovely originality. The miraculous *Assai meno presto* is one of the greatest things, with its astonishing orchestral effects, never for display but always for a rare and exotic beauty. Finally the *Allegro con brio* with its shattering humour; a stupendous thing, so big and so great; the peasant of genius – Rodin himself always seemed to me a peasant of genius – who revels in his mirth like a young Hercules.

Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony in F*, conducted by Richter, was a revelation of exactly what the composer meant to express; this massive music, with its firm outlines; music as if modelled by great thumb-marks; ecstatic little voices run in and out like little friendly animals between the feet of a

man striding on his way. The theme is joy, inexhaustible joy; then joy on more familiar terms, yet none the less profound; then a subtler mood of joy, joy with a new note of heroic love. Finally joy becomes a vast gaiety in which the elements join, and all nature and all the beasts; a gaiety which laughs and brays. It is a great universal intoxication, the immeasurable laughter of the world.

In the *Choral Fantasia*, *Op.* 80 (1808), there is a delicious effect of the *soli* on flute, oboe, clarionets and bassoons, each with its own individual colour, each with its own variation of the air which has been given by the piano. For once the Concerto form comes right in this subtly designed fantasia; with a wonderful sense of freedom, with a vivid originality. It is an experiment which might perhaps lead to the Choral Symphony. The vocal parts come in first for women *soli*, then for men *soli*, then, with full orchestra for full choir. Then the solo voices are woven, to and fro, in the pauses after the chords, exactly like the solo instruments before. The whole thing is absolutely instrumental, and very beautiful in instrumentation, with the utmost delicacy of light and shade.

I notice in the *Choral Symphony*, *Op.* 125 (1823-9), the vast elementary surging of the *Allegro*, with its variety subdued and heightened to splendour. If ever music was sublime, this is. It is not of the

earth only, but the earth of *Ubermenschen*, this overwhelming glory of sound. Never did music reach such an intensity, and it is the intensity of the Universe (as at the end, when the morning stars sang together in such voices) in which I felt a kind of sacred awe, mixed with wonder and delight.

The *molto vivace*, with its dance of playful thundering, its biting speed, its Maenad's dance of triumph, is superb; and I felt in hearing it the strange excitement that comes over one and increases, with a kind of suspense and wonder. The *Adagio* is great and exquisite even among his slow movements; there is a solemn sweetness which has in it all his tenderness and all his religion; a sleepy ecstasy, in which love dreams awake, with its mystic convolution, in which purity of sound can go no farther. In the *Presto* notice the splendid grotesque effect of the wind discords at the opening, and the curious trying over of the various airs, with the sudden capture of the right one, by cellos and basses, and then repeated.

What is wonderful are the wholly instrumental voices, so cruelly successful; and every sort of instrumental accompaniment (as that with big drum and triangle). The words are nothing; all he wants and gets is a sense of joy bursting its

bounds. Once, joy restrained to the praise of God, in the vastly planned ecclesiastical movement, with its rapture and mystery. There is a marvellous effect in the passage on the top *A fortissimo* for thirteen bars; fully justified; which leads to the final rush to the Abyss of joy, as of a glorious annihilation in rapture.

3

'Quite new demands on rendering,' said Wagner, 'arrive with Beethoven's works, through their uncommonly expressive use of rhythm; and to find the right tempo for a movement of a Beethoven symphony, above all to discover that tempo's perpetual, intensely delicate, and speaking modifications – without which the import of the extraordinarily eloquent musical phrase often stays completely unintelligible – is a task which any appointed orchestra-leader of nowadays has no scruple in embarking on, but only because he has not the faintest notion of what it means.' In hearing, during May of 1903, a Beethoven Festival, arranged by Professor Johann Kruse, in which all the symphonies and much of the most important writing for strings, were given in chronological order, under the conductorship of Felix Weingärtner, I found myself throughout conscious of just these difficulties, as I observed them mastered,

in the wholly individual way, by one who was probably, after Richter, the finest living conductor.

The vitality of Weingärtner extends from the elbow-joint to the wrist, and from the wrist to the tips of the fingers. The thumb and forefinger of the left hand, the hand which is not centred about the bâton, are pinched together delicately, as if in the act of taking snuff; the little finger is detached from the others, and creeps about the air, as with a subtle life of its own; and the whole hand, drooping and rising from the wrist, smooths out sound as if stroking soft texture. For extreme emphasis the fist is clenched, and plunges downwards and outwards with all the force of the elbow. There is never a sweeping gesture from the shoulder; the arms never open in a purely natural curve; the body holds itself rigid under extreme emotion, and seems readier to break than to bend. He has the air of a puppet wound up to work; and the clock-work is a brain incessantly alert, and acting through a nervous organization which gives its separate life to each note. You see him watching, listening to the sounds before they are heard; he seems to hold back the nervous force of his brain, lest it should outrun the measure. The notes live, not always with their most subtle, but always with their most vital musical life. He holds in himself, and he enforces mastery into his

orchestra, because he has no moments of slackness or of indifference. If he is sometimes hard or staccato, that is only the exaggeration of his inestimable merit of knowing exactly what the music means as music, of feeling the structure; it is the equivalent of a firm outline in drawing. He had not yet realized that the drawing of Leonardo may be finer than the drawing of Ingres: Richter's is perhaps the drawing of Leonardo.

Weingärtner's playing of the *Kreutzer Sonata*, *Op.* 47 (1803), is in itself an interpretation, like his conducting, very subdued, very detached, making every shade of musical meaning almost too mathematically clear; quite without magic, or genius for the instrument, but very interesting as a musical study. Each chord, each note, is taken separately: every pause dwelt on. There were no liaisons; yet never a note that was mechanical. It lived, at least, in the brain. His splendid skill is in indicating the development, the structure, and with absolutely no display. Only thus the brilliance certainly goes out of it, whatever abstract meaning we get – as in a profoundly unexacting performance of the wonderful *Andante* into which so many meanings can be read. The reading is scrupulous, and full of beauty, but without passion.

In the *Quartet in C Major*, *Op.* 59, a new colour

comes into the harmonies, colours that have passed through fire, and come out changed, a new body which has discovered a new soul. Here there is an ominous and mysterious drama, where tragic cries surge up and are quieted; one hears the death drum beating, perhaps only in the veins. Here Beethoven has found what no one has ever found before; poignant musical emotion, a quivering fulness, as of the incumbent heaven, above the earth of the *Allegro*; it is like the angels' singing in their grave ecstasy. In the *Scherzo*, the same immediate originality, the characteristic use of the Russian theme, whose sombre pungency suited his mood of writing just then. Finally the vast and amazing novelty of this dancing movement, in which a quick dance becomes half savage and half solemn.

In the *Quintet in C Major*, *Op.* 29 (1801), here, already, as in the *Allegro*, Beethoven is his essential self; the depth of divine delight. He will become greater, but never more truthful to beauty and to his own soul. Note the assured simplicity of his use of the tremolo, for his own purposes, and not for display; thus its delicate and certain appeal. Throughout there is a fresh, sheerly musical quality, he has not too much to say for clearness, but he has something to say and it is his own.

In the *Trio for Piano, Violin, and 'Cello, Op.* 97 (1810-11), I noticed the curious passage in the

Allegro, with pizzicato strings and shakes on the piano; it is not a little experimental, though an experiment which succeeds. The *Scherzo* has some of his strange and mysterious music, together with some of his light and poignant music; the result is a kind of fluttering and bewildering mystery, of a singularly original kind.

There is in the *Quartet in C Sharp Minor, Op.* 131, a purity in its harmony, harmony which exists only in the great joy of living harmony; with an intensity of beauty which at moments goes mad with delight. Form is so mastered that form, as a limit, disappears; we are conscious of nothing but of divine sounds wandering at their own will. How the speaking *Presto*, with its voices and cries, its tumult of laughter, its frequencies of caprice, satisfies all one's senses! Then comes the profound *Adagio* with its repressed sorrow; the conflicting and questioning voices of the *Allegro* that say in their own language so many secrets – still secrets to Beethoven.

I find in the *Quartet in A Minor, Op.* 132, the sense of mystery, the questioning spirit, so wholly absent in Mozart's divine acceptance. Many voices cry and question in this *Assai sostenuto* and have no answer; it is full of mournful doubt, with tragic outcries. Note in the firm confident and resolute *Allegro*, with its manly affirmations, the

strange piercing harmonies, avoiding any kind of sweetness so as to have their own savour. The 'Hymn of holy thanksgiving to God, in the Lydian mode' is a marvellous piece of abstract worship, swelling to the *Andante* of 'renewed strength,' with its passion of grateful hope, which cries and exults out of the depths; returning to the hymn, as if the impulse of worship had been re-born by mere gladness. Never has music come nearer to speaking or more luminously transcendent speech. It is a saying of speechless things, an outpouring of a heart too full for speech. Tears and the agony of praise are in this sombre music. The sense of impending tragedy is carried through the passionate *Allegro*, with its lonely agony. Has he ever written a more tragic work?

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THE reason why music is so much more difficult to write about than any other art, is because music is the one absolutely disembodied art, when it is heard, and no more than a proposition of Euclid, when it is written. It is wholly useless, to the student no less than to the general reader, to write about music in the style of the programmes for which we pay sixpence at the concerts. 'Repeated by flute and oboe, with accompaniment for clarionet (in triplets) and strings *pizzicato*, and then worked up by the full orchestra, this melody is eventually allotted to the 'cellos, its accompaniment now taking the form of chromatic passages,' and so forth. Not less useless is it to write a rhapsody which has nothing to do with the notes, and to present this as an interpretation of what the notes have said in an unknown language. Yet what method is there besides these two methods? None, indeed, that can ever be wholly satisfactory; at the best, no more than a compromise.

In writing about poetry, while precisely that quality which makes it poetry must always evade expression, there yet remain the whole definite meaning of the words, and the whole easily explicable technique of the verse, which can be made clear to every reader. In painting, you have the subject of the picture, and you have the colour,

handling, and the like, which can be expressed hardly less precisely in words. But music has no subject, outside itself; no meaning, outside its meaning as music; and, to understand anything of what is meant by its technique, a certain definite technical knowledge is necessary in the reader. What subterfuges are required, in order to give the vaguest suggestion of what a piece of music is like, and how little has been said, after all, beyond generalizations, which would apply equally to half a dozen different pieces! The composer himself, if you ask him, will tell you that you may be quite correct in what you say, but that he has no opinion in the matter.

Music has indeed a language, but it is a language in which birds and other angels may talk, but out of which we cannot translate their meaning. Emotion itself, how changed becomes even emotion when we transport it into a new world, in which only sound has feeling! But I am speaking as if it had died and been re-born there, whereas it was born in its own region, and is wholly ignorant of ours.

TECHNIQUE AND THE ARTIST

*

TECHNIQUE and the artist: that is a question, of interest to the student of every art, which was brought home to me with unusual emphasis the other afternoon, as I sat in the Queen's Hall, and listened to Ysaye and Busoni. Are we always quite certain what we mean when we speak of an artist? Have we quite realized in our own minds the extent to which technique must go to the making of an artist, and the point at which something else must be superadded? That is a matter which I often doubt, and the old doubt came back to my mind the other afternoon, as I listened to Ysaye and Busoni, and next day, as I turned over the newspapers.

I read, in the first paper I happen to take up, that the violinist and the pianist are 'a perfectly matched pair'; the applause, at the concert, was even more enthusiastic for Busoni than for Ysaye. I hear both spoken of as artists, as great artists; and yet, if words have any meaning, it seems to me that only one of the two is an artist at all, and the other, with all his ability, only an executant. Admit, for a moment, that the technique of the two is equal, though it is not quite possible to admit even that, in the strictest sense. So far, we have made only a beginning. Without technique, perfect of its kind, no one is worth consideration

in any art. The rope-dancer or the acrobat must be perfect in technique before he appears on the stage at all; in his case, a lapse from perfection brings its own penalty, death perhaps; his art begins when his technique is already perfect. Artists who deal in materials less fragile than human life should have no less undeviating a sense of responsibility to themselves and to art. But the performance comes afterwards, and it is the performance with which we are concerned. Of two acrobats, each equally skilful, one will be individual and an artist, the other will remain consummately skilful and uninteresting; the one having begun where the other leaves off. Now Busoni can do, on the pianoforte, whatever he can conceive; the question is, what can he conceive? As he sat at the piano playing Chopin, I thought of Busoni, of the Bechstein piano, of what fingers can do, of many other extraneous things, never of Chopin. I saw the pianist with the Christ-like head, the carefully negligent elegance of his appearance, and I heard wonderful sounds coming out of the Bechstein piano; but, try as hard as I liked, I could not feel the contact of soul and instrument, I could not feel that a human being was expressing himself in sound. A task was magnificently accomplished, but a new beauty had not come into the world. Then the *Kreutzer*

Sonata began, and I looked at Ysaye, as he stood an almost shapeless mass of flesh, holding the violin between his fat fingers, and looking vaguely into the air. He put the violin to his shoulder. The face had been like a mass of clay, waiting the sculptor's thumb. As the music came, an invisible touch seemed to pass over it; the heavy mouth and chin remained firm, pressed down on the violin; but the eyelids and the eyebrows began to move, as if the eyes saw the sound, and were drawing it in luxuriously, with a kind of sleepy ecstasy, as one draws in perfume out of a flower. Then, in that instant, a beauty which had never been in the world came into the world; a new thing was created, lived, died, having revealed itself to all those who were capable of receiving it. That thing was neither Beethoven nor Ysaye, it was made out of their meeting; it was music, not abstract, but embodied in sound; and just that miracle could never occur again, though others like it might be repeated for ever. When the sound stopped, the face returned to its blind and deaf waiting; the interval, like all the rest of life probably, not counting in the existence of that particular soul, which came and went with the music.

And Ysaye seems to me the type of the artist, not because he is faultless in technique, but because he begins to create his art at the point

where faultless technique leaves off. With him, every faculty is in harmony; he has not even too much of any good thing. There are times when Busoni astonishes one: Ysaye never astonishes one, it seems natural that he should do everything that he does, just as he does it. Art, as Aristotle has said finally, should always have 'a continual slight novelty;' it should never astonish, for we are astonished only by some excess or default, never by a thing being what it ought to be. It is a fashion of the moment to prize extravagance and to be timid of perfection. That is why we give the name of artist to those who can startle us most. We have come to value technique for the violence which it gives into the hands of those who possess it, in their assault upon our nerves. We have come to look upon technique as an end in itself, rather than as a means to an end. We have but one word of praise, and we use that one word lavishly. An Ysaye and a Busoni are the same to us, and it is to our credit if we are even aware that Ysaye is the equal of Busoni.

PACHMANN AND THE PIANO

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I

It seems to me that Pachmann is the only pianist who plays the piano as it ought to be played. I admit his limitations, I admit that he can play only certain things, but I contend that he is the greatest living pianist because he can play those things better than any other pianist can play anything. Pachmann is the Verlaine of pianists, and when I hear him I think of Verlaine reading his own verse, in a faint, reluctant voice, which you overheard. Other players have mastered the piano, Pachmann absorbs its soul, and it is only when he touches it that it really speaks its own voice.

The art of the pianist, after all, lies mainly in one thing, touch. It is by the skill, precision, and beauty of his touch that he makes music at all; it is by the quality of his touch that he evokes a more or less miraculous vision of sound for us. Touch gives him his only means of expression; it is to him what relief is to the sculptor or what values are to the painter. To 'understand,' as it is called, a piece of music, is not so much as the beginning of good playing; if you do not understand it with your fingers, what shall your brain profit you? In the interpretation of music all action of the brain which does not translate itself perfectly in touch is useless. You may as well not think at all as

not think in terms of your instrument, and the piano responds to one thing only, touch. Now Pachmann, beyond all other pianists, has this magic. When he plays it, the piano ceases to be a compromise. He makes it as living and penetrating as the violin, as responsive and elusive as the clavichord.

Chopin wrote for the piano with a more perfect sense of his instrument than any other composer, and Pachmann plays Chopin with an infallible sense of what Chopin meant to express in his mind. He seems to touch the notes with a kind of agony of delight; his face twitches with the actual muscular contraction of the fingers as they suspend themselves in the very act of touch. I am told that Pachmann plays Chopin in a morbid way. Well, Chopin was morbid; there are fevers and cold sweats in his music; it is not healthy music, and it is not to be interpreted in a robust way. It must be played, as Pachmann plays it, somnambulistically, with a tremulous delicacy of intensity, as if it were a living thing on whose nerves one were operating, and as if every touch might mean life or death.

I have heard pianists who played Chopin in what they called a healthy way. The notes swung, spun, and clattered, with a heroic repercussion of sound, a hurrying reiteration of fury, signifying

nothing. The piano stormed through the applause; the pianist sat imperturbably, hammering. Well, I do not think any music should be played like that, not Liszt even. Liszt connives at the suicide, but with Chopin it is a murder. When Pachmann plays Chopin the music sings itself, as if without the intervention of an executant, of one who stands between the music and our hearing. The music has to intoxicate him before he can play with it; then he becomes its comrade, in a kind of very serious game; himself, in short, that is to say inhuman. His fingers have in them a cold magic, as of soulless elves who have sold their souls for beauty. And this beauty, which is not of the soul, is not of the flesh; it is a sea-change, the life of the foam on the edge of the depths. Or it transports him into some mid-region of the air, between hell and heaven, where he hangs listening. He listens at all his senses. The dew, as well as the raindrop, has a sound for him.

In Pachmann's playing there is a frozen tenderness, with, at moments, the elvish triumph of a gnome who has found a bright crystal or a diamond. Pachmann is inhuman, and music, too, is inhuman. To him, and rightly, it is a thing not domesticated, not familiar as a household cat with our hearth. When he plays it, music speaks no language known to us, has nothing of ourselves to

tell us, but is shy, alien, and speaks a language which we do not know. It comes to us a divine hallucination, chills us a little with its 'airs from heaven' or elsewhere, and breaks down for an instant the too solid walls of the world, showing us the gulf. When d'Albert plays Chopin's *Berceuse*, beautifully, it is a lullaby for healthy male children growing too big for the cradle. Pachmann's is a lullaby for fairy changelings who have never had a soul, but in whose veins music vibrates; and in this intimate alien thing he finds a kind of humour.

In the attempt to humanize music, that attempt which almost every executant makes, knowing that he will be judged by his success or failure in it, what is most fatally lost is that sense of mystery which, to music, is atmosphere. In this atmosphere alone music breathes tranquilly. So remote is it from us that it can only be reached through some not quite healthy nervous tension, and Pachmann's physical disquietude when he plays is but a sign of what it has cost him to venture outside humanity, into music. Yet in music this mystery is a simple thing, its native air; and the art of the musician has less difficulty in its evocation than the art of the poet or the painter. With what an effort do we persuade words or colours back from their vulgar articulateness into at least some recollection

of that mystery which is deeper than sight or speech. Music can never wholly be detached from mystery, can never wholly become articulate, and it is in our ignorance of its true nature that we would tame it to humanity and teach it to express human emotions, not its own.

Pachmann gives you pure music, not states of soul or of temperament, not interpretations, but echoes. He gives you the notes in their own atmosphere, where they live for him an individual life, which has nothing to do with emotions or ideas. Thus he does not need to translate out of two languages: first, from sound to emotion, temperament, what you will; then from that back again to sound. The notes exist; it is enough that they exist. They mean for him just the sound and nothing else. You see his fingers feeling after it, his face calling to it, his whole body imploring it. Sometimes it comes upon him in such a burst of light that he has to cry aloud, in order that he may endure the ecstasy. You see him speaking to the music; he lifts his finger, that you may listen for it not less attentively. But it is always the thing itself that he evokes for you, as it rises flower-like out of silence, and comes to exist in the world. Every note lives, with the whole vitality of its existence. To Swinburne every word lives, just in the same way; when he says 'light,' he sees the

sunrise; when he says 'fire,' he is warmed through all his blood. And so Pachmann calls up, with this ghostly magic of his, the innermost life of music. I do not think he has ever put an intention into Chopin. Chopin had no intentions. He was a man, and he suffered; and he was a musician, and he wrote music; and very likely George Sand, and Majorca, and his disease, and Scotland, and the woman who sang to him when he died, are all in the music; but that is not the question. The notes sob and shiver, stab you like a knife, caress you like the fur of a cat; and are beautiful sound, the most beautiful sound that has been called out of the piano. Pachmann calls it out for you, disinterestedly, easily, with ecstasy, inevitably; you do not realize that he has had difficulties to conquer, that music is a thing for acrobats and athletes. He smiles to you, that you may realize how beautiful the notes are, when they trickle out of his fingers like singing water; he adores them and his own playing, as you do, and as if he had nothing to do with them but to pour them out of his hands. Pachmann is less showy with his fingers than any other pianist; his hands are stealthy acrobats, going quietly about their difficult business. They talk with the piano and the piano answers them. All that violence cannot do with the notes of the instrument, he does. His art begins where violence

leaves off; that is why he can give you fortissimo without hurting the nerves of a single string; that is why he can play a run as if every note had its meaning. To the others a run is a flourish, a tassel hung on for display, a thing extra; when Pachmann plays a run you realize that it may have its own legitimate sparkle of gay life. With him every note lives, has its own body and its own soul, and that is why it is worth hearing him play even trivial music like Mendelsshon's *Spring Song* or meaningless music like Taubert's Waltz: he creates a beauty out of sound itself and a beauty which is at the root of music. There are moments when a single chord seems to say in itself everything that music has to say. That is the moment in which everything but sound is annihilated, the moment of ecstasy; and it is of such moments that Pachmann is the poet.

And so his playing of Bach, as in the *Italian Concerto in F*, reveals Bach as if the dust had suddenly been brushed off his music. All that in the playing of others had seemed hard or dry becomes suddenly luminous, alive, and, above all, a miracle of sound. Through a delicacy of shading, like the art of Bach himself for purity, poignancy, and clarity, he envelops us with the thrilling atmosphere of the most absolutely musical music in the world. The playing of this concerto

is the greatest thing I have ever heard Pachmann do, but when he went on to play Mozart I heard another only less beautiful world of sound rise softly about me. There was the 'glittering peace' undimmed, and there was the nervous spring, the diamond hardness, as well as the glowing light and ardent sweetness. Yet another manner of playing, not less appropriate to its subject, brought before me the bubbling flow, the romantic moonlight, of Weber; this music that is a little showy, a little luscious, but with a gracious feminine beauty of its own. Chopin followed, and when Pachmann plays Chopin it is as if the soul of Chopin had returned to its divine body, the notes of this sinewy and feverish music, in which beauty becomes a torture and energy pierces to the centre and becomes grace, and languor swoons and is reborn a winged energy. The great third Scherzo was played with grandeur, and it is in the Scherzos, perhaps, that Chopin has built his most enduring work. The *Barcarolle*, which I have heard played as if it were Niagara and not Venice, was given with perfect quietude, and the second *Mazurka of Op.* 50 had that boldness of attack, with an almost stealthy intimacy in its secret rhythms, which in Pachmann's playing, and in his playing alone, gives you the dance and the reverie together. But I am not sure that the Études are not, in a very

personal sense what is most essential in Chopin, and I am not sure that Pachmann is not at his best in the playing of the Études.

Other pianists think, perhaps, but Pachmann plays. As he plays he is like one hypnotized by the music; he sees it beckoning, smiles to it, lifts his finger on a pause that you may listen to the note which is coming. This apparent hypnotism is really a fixed and continuous act of creation; there is not a note which he does not create for himself, to which he does not give his own vitality, the sensitive and yet controlling vitality of the medium. In playing the Bach he had the music before him that he might be wholly free from even the slight strain which comes from the almost unconscious act of remembering. It was for a precisely similar reason that Coleridge, in whose verse inspiration and art are more perfectly balanced than in any other English verse, often wrote down his poems first in prose that he might be unhampered by the conscious act of thought while listening for the music.

'There is no exquisite beauty,' said Bacon in a subtle definition, 'which has not some strangeness in its proportions.' The playing of Pachmann escapes the insipidity of that beauty which is without strangeness; it has in it something fantastically inhuman, like fiery ice, and it is for this

reason that it remains a thing uncapturable, a thing whose secret he himself could never reveal. It is like the secret of the rhythms of Verlaine, and no prosodist will ever tell us why a line like:

Dans un palais, soie et or, dans Ecbatane,

can communicate a new shiver to the most languid or the most experienced nerves. Like the art of Verlaine, the art of Pachmann is one wholly of suggestion; his fingers state nothing, they evoke. I said like the art of Verlaine, because there is a singular likeness between the two methods. But is not all art a suggestion, an evocation, never a statement? Many of the great forces of the present day have set themselves to the task of building up a large, positive art in which everything shall be said with emphasis: the art of Zola, the art of Mr. Kipling, in literature; the art of Mr. Sargent in painting; the art of Richard Strauss in music. In all these remarkable men there is some small, essential thing lacking; and it is in men like Verlaine, like Whistler, like Pachmann, that we find the small, essential thing, and nothing else.

2

The sounds torture me: I see them in my brain;
They spin a flickering web of living threads,
Like butterflies upon the garden beds,
Nets of bright sound. I follow them: in vain.

I must not brush the least dust from their wings:
They die of a touch; but I must capture them,
Or they will turn to a caressing flame,
And lick my soul up with their flutterings.

The sounds torture me: I count them with my eyes,
I feel them like a thirst between my lips;
Is it my body or my soul that cries
With little coloured mouths of sound, and drips
In these bright drops that turn to butterflies
Dying delicately at my finger tips?

3

Pachmann has the head of a monk who has had commerce with the Devil, and it is whispered that he has sold his soul to the diabolical instrument, which, since buying it, can speak in a human voice. The sounds torture him, as a wizard is tortured by the shapes he has evoked. He makes them dance for his pleasure, and you hear their breath come and go, in the swell and subsiding of those marvellous crescendoes and diminuendoes which set the strings pulsating like a sea. He listens for the sound, listens for the last echo of it after it is gone, and is caught away from us visibly into that unholy company.

Pachmann is the greatest player of the piano

now living. He cannot interpret every kind of music, though his actual power is more varied than he has led the public to suppose. I have heard him play in private a show-piece of Liszt, a thunderous thing of immense difficulty, requiring a technique quite different from the technique which alone he cares to reveal to us; he had not played it for twenty years, and he played it with exactly the right crackling splendour that it demanded. On the rare occasions when he plays Bach, something that no one of our time has ever perceived or rendered in that composer seems to be evoked, and Bach lives again, with something of that forgotten life which only the harpsichord can help us to remember under the fingers of other players. Mozart and Weber are two of the composers whom he plays with the most natural instinct, for in both he finds and unweaves that dainty web of bright melody which Mozart made out of sunlight and Weber out of moonlight. There is nothing between him and them, as there is in Beethoven, for instance, who hides himself in the depths of a cloud, in the depths of wisdom, in the depths of the heart. And to Pachmann all this is as strange as mortal firesides to a fairy. He wanders round it, wondering at the great walls and bars that have been set about the faint, escaping spirit of flame. There is nothing human

in him, and as music turns towards humanity it slips from between his hands. What he seeks and finds in music is the inarticulate, ultimate thing in sound: the music, in fact.

It has been complained that Pachmann's readings are not intellectual, that he does not interpret. It is true that he does not interpret between the brain and music, but he is able to disimprison sound, as no one has ever done with mortal hands, and the piano, when he touches it, becomes a joyous, disembodied thing, a voice and nothing more, but a voice which is music itself. To reduce music to terms of human intelligence or even of human emotion is to lower it from its own region, where it is Ariel. There is something in music, which we can apprehend only as sound, that comes to us out of heaven or hell, mocking the human agency that gives it speech, and taking flight beyond it. When Pachmann plays a Prelude of Chopin, all that Chopin was conscious of saying in it will, no doubt, be there; it is all there, if Godowsky plays it; every note, every shade of expression, every heightening and quickening, everything that the notes actually say. But under Pachmann's miraculous hands a miracle takes place; mystery comes about it like an atmosphere, an icy thrill traverses it, the terror and ecstasy of a beauty that is not in the world envelop

it; we heard sounds that are awful and exquisite, crying outside time and space. Is it through Pachmann's nerves, or through ours, that this communion takes place? Is it technique, temperament, touch, that reveals to us what we have never dreamed was hidden in sounds? Could Pachmann himself explain to us his own magic?

He would tell us that he had practised the piano with more patience than others, that he had taken more trouble to acquire a certain touch which is really the only way to the secret of his instrument. He could tell you little more; but, if you saw his hands settle on the keys, and fly and poise there, as if they had nothing to do with the perturbed, listening face that smiles away from them, you would know how little he had told you. Now let us ask Godowsky, whom Pachmann himself sets above all other pianists, what he has to tell us about the way in which he plays.

When Godowsky plays he sits bent and motionless, as if picking out a pattern with his fingers. He seems to keep surreptitious watch upon them, as they run swiftly on their appointed errands. There is no errand they are not nimble enough to carry without a stumble to the journey's end. They obey him as if in fear; they dare not turn aside from the straight path; for their whole aim is to get to the end of the journey, having done their

task faultlessly. Sometimes, but without relaxing his learned gravity, he plays a difficult game, as in the Paganini variations of Brahms, which were done with a skill as sure and as soulless as Paganini's may have been. Sometimes he forgets that the notes are living things, and tosses them about a little cruelly, as if they were a juggler's balls. They drop like stones; you are sorry for them, because they are alive. How Chopin suffers, when he plays the Preludes! He plays them without a throb; the scholar has driven out the magic; Chopin becomes a mathematician. In Brahms, in the *G Minor Rhapsody*, you hear much more of what Brahms meant to do; for Brahms has set strange shapes dancing, like the skeletons 'in the ghosts' moonshine' in a ballad of Beddoes; and these bodiless things take shape in the music, as Godowsky plays it unflinchingly, giving it to you exactly as it is, without comment. Here his fidelity to every outline of form becomes an interpretation. But Chopin is so much more than form that to follow every outline of it may be to leave Chopin out of the outline.

Pachmann, of all the interpreters of Chopin, is the most subtle, the one most likely to do for the most part what Chopin wanted. The test, I think, is in the Third Scherzo. That great composition, one of the greatest among Chopin's works, for it

contains all his qualities in an intense measure, might have been thought less likely to be done perfectly by Pachmann than such Coleridge in music, such murmurings out of paradise, as the *Étude in F Minor* (*Op.* 25, No. 2) or one of those Mazurkas in which Chopin is more poignantly fantastic in substance, more wild and whimsical in rhythm, than elsewhere in his music; and indeed, as Pachmann played them, they were strange and lovely gambols of unchristened elves. But in the Scherzo he mastered this great, violent, heroic thing as he had mastered the little freakish things and the trickling and whispering things. He gave meaning to every part of its decoration, yet lost none of the splendour and wave-like motion of the whole tossing and eager sea of sound.

Pachmann's art, like Chopin's, which it perpetuates, is of that peculiarly modern kind which aims at giving the essence of things in their fine shades: *la nuance encor!* Is there, it may be asked, any essential thing left out in the process; do we have attenuation in what is certainly a way of sharpening one's steel to a very fine point? The sharpened steel gains in what is most vital in its purpose by this very paring away of its substance; and why should not a form of art strike deeper for the same reason? Our only answer to

Whistler and Verlaine is the existence of Rodin and Wagner. There we have weight as well as sharpness; these giants fly. It was curious to hear, in the vast luminous music of the *Rheingold*, flowing like water about the earth, bare to its roots, not only an amplitude but a delicacy of fine shades not less realized than in Chopin. Wagner, it is true, welds the lyric into drama, without losing its lyrical quality. Yet there is no perfect lyric which is made less by the greatness of even a perfect drama.

Chopin was once thought to be a drawing-room composer; Pachmann was once thought to be no 'serious artist.' Both have triumphed, not because the taste of any public has improved, but because a few people who knew have whispered the truth to one another, and at last it has leaked out like a secret.

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I SHALL never cease to associate Paderewski with the night of the Jubilee. I had gone on foot from the Temple through those packed, gaudy, noisy, and vulgarized streets, through which no vehicles could pass, to a rare and fantastic house at the other end of London, a famous house hospitable to all the arts; and Paderewski sat with closed eyes and played the piano, there in his friend's house, as if he were in his own home. After the music was over, someone said to me, 'I feel as if I had been in hell,' so profound was the emotion she had experienced from the playing. I would have said heaven rather than hell, for there seemed to be nothing but pure beauty, beauty half asleep and dreaming of itself, in the marvellous playing. A spell, certainly, was over everyone, and then the exorciser became human, and jested deliciously till the early morning, when, as I went home through the still garrulous and peopled streets, I saw the last flutter of flags and streamers between night and dawn. All the world had been rioting for pleasure in the gross way of popular demonstrations; and in the very heart of this uproar there had been, for a few people, this divine escape.

No less magical, soothing, enchanting was the apparition, in Queen's Hall, ten years later, of

this unchanged creature with the tortured Burne-Jones face, level and bewildering eyes, the web of gold hair still poised like a halo. Beauty grew up around him like a sudden, exuberant growth, more vigorous and from a deeper root than before. I realized, more than ever, how the musician had always been the foundation of the virtuoso. I have used the word apparition advisedly. There is something, not only in the aspect of Paderewski, which seems to come mysteriously, but full of light, from a great distance. He startles music into a surprised awakening.

The art of Paderewski recalls to me the art of the most skilled and the most distinguished of equilibrists, himself a Pole, Paul Cinquevalli. People often speak, wrongly, of Paderewski's skill as acrobatic. The word conveys some sense of disparagement and, so used, is inaccurate. But there is much in common between two forms of an art in which physical dexterity counts for so much, and that passionate precision to which error must be impossible. It is the same kind of joy that you get from Cinquevalli when he juggles with cannon-balls and from Paderewski when he brings a continuous thunder out of the piano. Other people do the same things, but no else can handle thunder or a cannon-ball delicately.

And Paderewski, in his absolute mastery

of his instrument, seems to do the most difficult things without difficulty, with a scornful ease, an almost accidental quality which, found in perfection, marvellously decorates it. It is difficult to imagine that anyone since Liszt has had so complete a mastery of every capacity of the piano, and Liszt, though probably even more brilliant, can hardly be imagined with this particular kind of charm. His playing is in the true sense an inspiration; he plays nothing as if he had learned it with toil, but as if it had come to him out of a kind of fiery meditation. Even his thunder is not so much a thing specially cultivated for its own sake as a single prominent detail in a vast accomplishment. When he plays, the piano seems to become thrillingly and tempestuously alive, as if brother met brother in some joyous triumph. He collaborates with it, urging it to battle like a war-horse. And the quality of the sonority which he gets out of it is unlike that which is teased or provoked from the instrument by any other player. Fierce exuberant delight wakens under his fingers, in which there is a sensitiveness almost impatient, and under his feet, which are as busy as an organist's with the pedals. The music leaps like pouring water, flood after flood of sound, caught together and flung onward by a central energy. The separate notes are never picked out

and made into ornaments; all the expression goes to passage after passage, realized acutely in their sequence. Where others give you hammering on an anvil, he gives you thunder as if heard through clouds. And he is full of leisure and meditation, brooding thoughtfully over certain exquisite things as if loth to let them pass over and be gone. And he seems to play out of a dream, in which the fingers are secondary to the meaning, but report that meaning with entire felicity.

In the playing of the *Moonlight* sonata there was no Paderewski, there was nothing but Beethoven. The finale, of course, was done with the due brilliance, the executant's share in a composition not written for modern players. But what was wonderful, for its reverence, its perfection of fidelity, was the playing of the slow movement and of the little sharp movement which follows, like the crying and hopping of a bird. The ear waited, and was satisfied in every shade of anticipation; nothing was missed, nothing was added; the pianist was as it were a faithful and obedient shadow. As you listened you forgot technique, or that it was anybody in particular who was playing: the sonata was there, with all its moonlight, as every lover of Beethoven had known that it existed.

Before the Beethoven there had been a 'Vari-

ation and Fugue on an original theme,' in which Paderewski played his own music, really as if he were improvising it there and then. I am not sure that that feeling is altogether to the credit of the music, which, as I heard it for the first time, seemed almost too perilously effective, in its large contrasts, its Liszt-like succession of contradictory moods. Sound was evoked that it might swell and subside like waves, break suddenly, and die out in a white rain of stinging foam. Pauses, surprises, all were delicately calculated and the weaver of these bewildered dreams seemed to watch over them like a Loge of celestial ingenuity.

When the actual Liszt came, the interminable *Sonata in B minor*, in which the sugar and the fire are so strangely mixed, it was as if Paderewski were still playing his own music. If ever there was a show piece for the piano, this was it, and if ever there was a divine showman for it, it was Paderewski. You felt at once the personal sympathy of the great pianist for the great pianist. He was no longer reverential, as with Beethoven, not doing homage but taking part, sharing almost in a creation, comet-like, of stars in the sky. Nothing in the bravura disconcerted or even displeased him, no lack of coherence or obviousness in contrasts disturbed him; what was loud, boisterous,

explosive, he tossed about as in a colossal game, he bathed luxuriously in what was luscious in the melodies, giving them almost more than their real worth by the delighted skill with which he set them singing. A more astonishing, a more convincing, a more overwhelming *tour de force* could hardly be achieved on the piano: could an eruption of Vesuvius be more spectacularly magnificent?

Liszt's music for the piano was written for a pianist who could do anything that has ever been done with the instrument, and the result is not so wholly satisfactory as in the case of Chopin, who, with a smaller technique, knew more of the secret of music. Chopin never dazzles, Liszt blinds. It is a question if he ever did full justice to his own genius, which was partly that of an innovator, and people are only now beginning to do justice to what was original as well as fine in his work. How many ideas Wagner caught from him, in his shameless transfiguring triumphant way! The melody of the Flower-Maidens, for instance, in *Parsifal*, is borrowed frankly from a tone-poem of Liszt in which it is no more than a thin, rocking melody, without any of the mysterious fascination that Wagner put into it. But in writing for the piano Liszt certainly remembered that it was he, and not some unknown person, who was to play

these hard and showy rhapsodies, in which there are no depths, though there are splendours. That is why Liszt is the test rather of the virtuoso than of the interpreter, why, therefore, it was so infinitely more important that Paderewski should have played the Beethoven sonata as impersonally as he did than that he should have played the Liszt sonata with so much personal abandonment. Between those limits there seems to be contained the whole art of the pianist, and Paderewski has attained both limits.

After his concert was over, Paderewski gave seven encores, in the midst of an enthusiasm which recurs whenever and wherever he gives a concert. What is the peculiar quality in this artist which acts always with the same intoxicating effect? Is it anything quite normal in his fingers, or is it, in the image of a brilliant and fantastic writer on music in America, Mr. James Huneker, a soul like the soul of Belus, 'the Raphael of the piano,' which, 'suspended above him, like a coat of many colours,' mesmerizes the audience, while he sits motionless, not touching the notes?

Is Paderewski after all a Belus? Is it his many-coloured soul that 'magnetizes our poor vertebræ,' in Verlaine's phrase, and not the mere skill of his fingers? Art, it has been said, is contagious, and to compel universal sympathy is to succeed in the

last requirements of an art. Of what difference is it whether, like Keats, he perpetuates his personal magnetism in a stanza, or, like Paderewski, sheds it, like a perfume, for that passing moment which is all the eternity ever given to the creator of beautiful sounds?

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Other orchestras give performances, readings, approximations; the Meiningen orchestra gives an interpretation, that is, the thing itself. When this orchestra plays a piece of music every note lives, and not, as with most orchestras, every particularly significant note. Brahms is sometimes dull, but he is never dull when these people play him; Schubert is sometimes tame, but not when they play him. What they do is precisely to put vitality into even those parts of a composition in which it is scarcely present, or scarcely realizable; and that is a much more difficult thing, and really a more important thing, for the proper appreciation of music, than the heightening of what is already fine, and obviously fine in itself. And this particular quality of interpretation has its value too as criticism. For, while it gives the utmost value to what is implicitly there, there at least in embryo, it cannot create out of nothing; it cannot make insincere work sincere, or fill empty work with meaning which never could have belonged to it. Brahms, at his moments of least vitality, comes into a new vigour of life; but Strauss, played by these sincere, precise, thoughtful musicians shows, as he never could show otherwise, the distance at which his lively spectre stands from life. When I heard the *Don Juan*,

which I had heard twice before, and liked less the second time than the first, I realized finally the whole strain, pretence, and emptiness of the thing. Played with this earnest attention to the meaning of every note, it was like a trivial drama when Duse acts it; it went to pieces through being taken at its own word. It was as if a threadbare piece of stuff were held up to the full sunlight; you saw every stitch that was wanting.

The *Don Juan* was followed by the Entr'acte and Ballet music from *Rosamunde*, and here the same sunlight was no longer criticism, but rather an illumination. I have never heard any music more beautifully played. I could only think of the piano playing of Pachmann. The faint, delicate music just came into existence, breathed a little, and was gone. Here for once was an orchestra which could literally be overheard. The overture to the *Meistersinger* followed, and here, for the first time, I got, quite flawless and uncontradictory, the two impressions which that piece presents to one simultaneously. I heard the unimpeded march forward, and I distinguished at the same time every delicate impediment thronging the way. Some renderings give you a sense of solidity and straightforward movement; others of the elaborate and various life which

informs this so solid structure. Here one got the complete thing, completely rendered.

I could not say the same of the rendering of the overture to *Tristan*. Here the notes, all that was so to speak merely musical in the music, were given their just expression; but the something more, the vast heave and throb of the music, was not there. It was 'classical' rendering of what is certainly not 'classical' music. Hear that overture as Richter gives it, and you will realize just where the Meiningen orchestra is lacking. It has the kind of energy which is required to render Beethoven's multitudinous energy, or the energy which can be heavy and cloudy in Brahms, or like overpowering light in Bach, or, in Wagner himself, an energy which works within known limits, as in the overture to the *Meistersinger*. But that wholly new, and somewhat feverish, overwhelming quality which we find in the music of *Tristan* meets with something less than the due response. It is a quality which people used to say was not musical at all, a quality which does not appeal certainly to the musical sense alone: for the rendering of that we must go to Richter.

Otherwise, in that third concert it would be difficult to say whether Schumann, Brahms, Mozart, or Beethoven was the better rendered.

Perhaps one might choose Mozart for pure pleasure. It was the *Serenade* for wind instruments, and it seemed, played thus perfectly, the most delightful music in the world. The music of Mozart is, no doubt, the most beautiful music in the world. When I heard the serenade I thought of Coventry Patmore's epithet, actually used, I think, about Mozart: 'glittering peace.' Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, and Beethoven all seemed for the moment to lose a little of their light under this pure and tranquil and unwavering 'glitter.' I hope I shall never hear the *Serenade* again, for I shall never hear it played as these particular players played it.

The Meiningen orchestra is famous for its wind, and when, at the first concert, I heard Beethoven's Rondino for wind instruments, it seemed to me that I was hearing brass for the first time as I had imagined brass ought to sound. Here was, not so much a new thing which one had never thought possible, as that precise thing which one's ears had expected, and waited for, and never heard. One quite miraculous thing these wind players certainly did, in common, however, with the whole orchestra. And that was to give an effect of distance, as if the sound came actually from beyond the walls. I noticed it first in the overture to *Leonore*, the first piece which

they played; an unparalleled effect and one of surprising beauty.

Another matter for which the Meiningen orchestra is famous is its interpretation of the works of Brahms. At each concert some fine music of Brahms was given finely, but it was not until the fourth concert that I realized, on hearing the *Third Symphony*, everything of which Brahms was capable. It may be that a more profound acquaintance with his music would lead me to add other things to this thing as the finest music which he ever wrote; but the *Third Symphony* certainly revealed to me, not altogether a new, but a complete Brahms. It had all his intellect and something more; thought had taken fire, and become a kind of passion.

MOZART IN THE MIRABELL-GARTEN

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They were giving a cycle of Mozart operas at Munich, at the Hof-Theater, to follow the Wagner operas at the Prinz-Regenten Theatre; and I stayed on my way to Salzburg, to hear *Die Zauberflöte*. It was perfectly given, with a small, choice orchestra under Herr Zumpe, and with every part except the tenor's admirably sung and acted. Herr Julius Zarest, from Hanover, was particularly good as Papageno; the Eva of *Die Meistersinger* made an equally good Pamina. And it was staged under Herr von Possart's direction, as suitably and as successfully, in its different way, as the Wagner opera had been. The sombre Egyptian scenes of this odd story, with its menagerie and its pantomime transformation, were turned into a thrilling spectacle, and by means of nothing but a little canvas and paint and limelight. It could have cost very little, compared with an English Shakespeare revival, let us say; but how infinitely more spectacular, in the good sense, it was! Every effect was significant, perfectly in its place, doing just what it had to do, and without thrusting itself forward for separate admiration. German art of to-day is all decorative, and it is at its best when it is applied to the scenery of the stage. Its fault, in serious

painting, is that it is too theatrical, it is too anxious to be full of too many qualities besides the qualities of good painting. It is too emphatic, it is meant for artificial light. If Franz Stuck would paint for the stage, instead of using his vigorous brush to paint nature without distinction and nightmares without imagination on easel-canvases, he would do, perhaps rather better, just what these scene-painters do, with so much skill and taste. They have the sense of effective decoration; and German art, at present, is almost wholly limited to that sense.

I listened, with the full consent of my eyes, to the lovely music, which played round the story like light transfiguring a masquerade; and now, by a lucky chance, I can brood over it here in Salzburg, where Mozart was born, where he lived, where the house in which he wrote the opera is to be seen, a little garden-house brought over from Vienna and set down where it should always have been, high up among the pinewoods of the Capuzinerberg. I find myself wondering how much Mozart took to himself, how much went to his making, in this exquisite place, set in a hollow of great hills, from which, if you look down upon it, it has the air of a little toy town out of a Noah's Ark, set square in a clean, trim, perfectly flat map of meadows, with its flat roofs, packed close

together on each side of a long, winding river, which trails across the whole breadth of the plain. From the midst of the town you look up everywhere at heights; rocks covered with pine-trees, beyond them hills hooded with white clouds, great soft walls of darkness, on which the mist is like the bloom of a plum; and, right above you, the castle, on its steep rock swathed in trees, with its grey walls and turrets, like the castle which one has imagined for all the knights of all the romances. All this, no doubt, entered into the soul of Mozart, and has its meaning for him; but where I seem actually to see him, where I can fancy him walking most often, and hearing more sounds than elsewhere come to him through his eyes and his senses, is in the Mirabell-Garten, which lies behind the palace built by an Archbishop of Salzburg in the seventeenth century, and which is laid out in the conventional French fashion, with a harmony that I find in few other gardens. I have never walked in a garden which seemed to keep itself so reticently within its own severe and gracious limits. The trees themselves seem to grow naturally into the pattern of this garden, with its formal alleys, in which the birds fly in and out of the trellised roofs, its square-cut bushes, its low stone balustrades, its tall urns out of which droop trails of pink and green, its round flower-beds,

each of a single colour, set at regular intervals on the grass, its tiny fountain dripping faintly into a green and brown pool; the long, sad lines of the Archbishop's Palace, off which the brown paint is peeling; the whole sad charm, dainty melancholy, formal beauty, and autumnal air of it. It was in the Mirabell-Garten that I seemed nearest to Mozart.

The music of Mozart, as one hears it in *Die Zauberflöte*, is music without desire, music content with beauty, and to be itself. It has the firm outlines of Dürer or of Botticelli, with the same constraint within a fixed form, if one compares it with the Titian-like freedom and splendour of Wagner. In hearing Mozart I saw Botticelli's *Spring*; in hearing Wagner I had seen the Titian *Scourging of Christ*. Mozart has what Coventry Patmore called 'a glittering peace': to Patmore that quality distinguished supreme art, and, indeed, the art of Mozart is, in its kind, supreme. It has an adorable purity of form, and it has no need to look outside those limits which it has found or fixed for itself. Mozart cares little, as a rule, for what he has to express; but he cares infinitely for the way in which he expresses everything, and, through the mere emotional power of the notes themselves, he conveys to us all that he cares to convey: awe, for instance, in those solemn scenes

of the priests of Isis. He is a magician, who plays with his magic, and can be gay, out of mere pleasant idleness, fooling with Papagenus as Shakespeare fools in *Twelfth-Night*. *Die Zauberflöte* is really a very fine kind of pantomime, to which music lends itself in the spirit of the thing, yet without condescending to be grotesque. The duet of Papagenus and Papagena is absolutely comic, but it is as lovely as a duet of two birds, of less flaming feather. As the lovers ascend through fires and floods, only the piping of the magic flute is heard in the orchestra: imagine Wagner threading it into the web of a great orchestral pattern! For Mozart it was enough, and for his art, it was enough. He gives you harmony which does not need to mean anything outside itself, in order to be supremely beautiful; and he gives you beauty with a certain exquisite formality, not caring to go beyond the lines which contain that reticent, sufficient charm of the Mirabell-Garten.

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1. Bayreuth and Munich

BAYREUTH is Wagner's creation in the world of action, as the music-dramas are his creation in the world of art; and it is a triumph not less decisive, in its transposition of dream into reality. Remember that every artist, in every art, has desired his own Bayreuth, and that only Wagner has attained it. Who would not rather remain at home, receiving the world, than go knocking, humbly or arrogantly, at many doors, offering an entertainment, perhaps unwelcome? The artist must always be at cautious enmity with his public, always somewhat at its mercy, even after he has conquered its attention. The crowd never really loves art, it resents art as a departure from its level of mediocrity; and fame comes to an artist only when there is a sufficient number of intelligent individuals in the crowd to force their opinion upon the resisting mass of the others, in the form of a fashion which it is supposed to be unintelligent not to adopt. Bayreuth exists because Wagner willed that it should exist, and because he succeeded in forcing his ideas upon a larger number of people of power and action than any other artist of our time. Wagner always got what he wanted, not always when he wanted it. He had a king on his side, he had Liszt on his side, the

one musician of all others who could do most for him; he had the necessary enemies, besides the general resistance of the crowd; and at last he got his theatre, not in time to see the full extent of his own triumph in it, but enough, I think, to let him die perfectly satisfied. He had done what he wanted: there was the theatre, and there were his works, and the world had learnt where to come when it was called.

And there is now a new Bayreuth, where, almost as well as at Bayreuth itself, one can see and hear Wagner's music as Wagner wished it to be seen and heard. The square, plain, grey and green Prinz-Regenten Theatre at Munich is an improved copy of the theatre at Bayreuth, with exactly the same amphitheatrical arrangement of seats, the same invisible orchestra and vast stage. Everything is done as at Bayreuth: there are even the three *fanfaren* at the doors, with the same punctual and irrevocable closing of the doors at the beginning of each act. As at Bayreuth, the solemnity of the whole thing makes one almost nervous, for the first few minutes of each act; but, after that, how near one is, in this perfectly darkened, perfectly quiet theatre, in which the music surges up out of the 'mystic gulf,' and the picture exists in all the ecstasy of a picture on the other side of it, beyond reality, how near one is to being

alone, in the passive state in which the flesh is able to endure the great burdening and uplifting of vision. There are thus now two theatres in the world in which music and drama can be absorbed, and not merely guessed at.

2. The Lesson of *Parsifal*

The performance of *Parsifal*, as I saw it at Bayreuth, seemed to me the most really satisfying performance I had ever seen in a theatre; and I have often, since then, tried to realize for myself exactly what it was that one might learn from that incarnation of the ideas, the theoretical ideas, of Wagner. The music itself has the abstract quality of Coventry Patmore's odes. I cannot think of it except in terms of sight. Light surges up out of it, as out of unformed depths; light descends from it, as from the sky; it breaks into flashes and sparkles of light, it broadens out into a vast sea of light. It is almost metaphysical music; pure ideas take visible form, humanize themselves in a new kind of ecstasy. The ecstasy has still a certain fever in it; these shafts of light sometimes pierce the soul like a sword; it is not peace, the peace of Bach, to whom music can give all he wants; it is the unsatisfied desire of a kind of flesh of the spirit, and music is but a voice. *Parsifal* is religious music, but it is the music of a religion which had

never before found expression. I have found in a motet of Vittoria one of the motives of *Parsifal*, almost note for note, and there is no doubt that Wagner owed much to Palestrina and his school. But even the sombre music of Vittoria does not plead and implore like Wagner's. The outcry comes and goes, not only with the suffering of Amfortas, the despair of Kundry. This abstract music has human blood in it.

What Wagner has tried to do is to unite mysticism and the senses, to render mysticism through the senses. Mr. Watts-Dunton has pointed out that that is what Rossetti tried to do in painting. That mysterious intensity of expression which we see in the faces of Rossetti's latest pictures has something of the same appeal as the insatiable crying-out of a carnal voice, somewhere in the depths of Wagner's latest music.

In *Parsifal*, more perhaps than anywhere else in his work, Wagner realized the supreme importance of monotony, the effect that could be gained by the incessant repetition of a few ideas. All that music of the closing scene of the first act is made out of two or three phrases, and it is by the finest kind of invention that those two or three phrases are developed, and repeated, and woven together into so splendid a tissue. And, in the phrases themselves, what severity, what bareness almost!

It is in their return upon themselves, their weighty reiterance, that their force and significance become revealed; and if, as Nietzsche says, they end by hypnotizing us, well, all art is a kind of hypnotic process, a cunning absorption of the will of another.

Parsifal presents itself as before all things a picture. The music, soaring up from hidden depths, and seeming to drop from the heights, and be reflected back from shining distances, though it is, more than anything I have ever heard, like one of the great forces of nature, the sea or the wind, itself makes pictures, abstract pictures; but even the music, as one watches the stage, seems to subordinate itself to the visible picture there. And, so perfectly do all the arts flow into one, the picture impresses one chiefly by its rhythm, the harmonies of its convention. The lesson of *Parsifal* is the lesson that, in art, rhythm is everything. Every moment in the acting of this drama makes a picture, and every movement is slow, deliberate, as if automatic. No actor makes a gesture, which has not been regulated for him; there is none of that unintelligent haphazard known as being 'natural'; these people move like music, or with that sense of motion which it is the business of painting to arrest. Gesture being a part of a picture, how should it but be settled as definitely, for that pictorial effect

which all action on the stage is (more or less unconsciously) striving after, as if it were the time of a song, or the stage direction: 'Cross stage to right'? Also, every gesture is slow; even despair having its artistic limits, its reticence. It is difficult to express the delight with which one sees, for the first time, people really motionless on the stage. After all, action, as it has been said, is only a way of spoiling something. The aim of the modern stage, of all drama, since the drama of the Greeks, is to give a vast impression of bustle, of people who, like most people in real life, are in a hurry about things; and our actors, when they are not making irrelevant speeches, are engaged in frantically trying to make us see that they are feeling acute emotion, by I know not what restlessness, contortion, and ineffectual excitement. If it were once realized how infinitely more important are the lines in the picture than these staccato extravagances which do but aim at tearing it out of its frame, breaking violently through it, we should have learnt a little, at least, of what the art of the stage should be, of what Wagner has shown us that it can be.

Distance from the accidents of real life, atmosphere, the space for a new, fairer world to form itself, being of the essence of Wagner's representation, it is worth noticing how adroitly he throws

back this world of his, farther and farther into the background, by a thousand tricks of lighting, the actual distance of the stage from the proscenium and by such calculated effects, as that long scene of the Graal, with its prolonged movement and ritual, through the whole of which Parsifal stands motionless, watching it all. How that solitary figure at the side, merely looking on, though, unknown to himself, he is the centre of the action, also gives one the sense of remoteness, which it was Wagner's desire to produce, throwing back the action into a reflected distance, as we watch someone on the stage who is watching it!

The beauty of this particular kind of acting and staging is of course the beauty of convention. The scenery, for instance, with what an enchanting leisure it merely walks along before one's eyes, when a change is wanted! Convention, here as in all plastic art, is founded on natural truth very closely studied. The rose is first learned, in every wrinkle of its petals, petal by petal, before that reality is elaborately departed from, in order that a new, abstract beauty may be formed out of those outlines, all but those outlines being left out.

And *Parsifal*, which is thus solemnly represented before us, has in it, in its very essence, that hieratic character which it is the effort of supreme art to attain. At times one is reminded of the most

beautiful drama in the world, the Indian drama *Sakuntala*: in that litter of leaves, brought in so touchingly for the swan's burial, in the old hermit watering his flowers. There is something of the same universal tenderness, the same religious linking together of all the world, in some vague enough, but very beautiful, Pantheism. I think it is beside the question to discuss how far Wagner's intentions were technically religious: how far Parsifal himself is either Christ or Buddha, and how far Kundry is a new Magdalen. Wagner's mind was the mind to which all legend is sacred, every symbol of divine things to be held in reverence; but symbol, with him, was after all a means to an end and could never have been accepted as really an end in itself. I should say that in *Parsifal* he is profoundly religious, but not because he intended, or did not intend, to shadow the Christian mysteries. His music, his acting, are devout, because the music has a disembodied ecstasy, and the acting a noble rhythm, which can but produce in us something of the solemnity of sensation produced by the service of the Mass, and are in themselves a kind of religious ceremonial.

3. The Art of Wagner

In saying, as we may truly say, that Wagner made music pictorial, it should be remembered

that there is nothing new in the aim, only in the continuity of its success. Haydn, in his *Creation*, evoked landscapes, giving them precision by an almost mechanical imitation of cuckoo and nightingale. Trees had rustled and water flowed in the music of every composer. But with Wagner it may be said that the landscape of his music moves before our eyes as clearly as the moving scenery with which he does but accentuate it; and it is always there, not a *décor*, but a world, the natural world in the midst of which his people of the drama live their passionate life, and a world in sympathy with all their passion. And in his audible representation of natural sounds and natural sights he does, consummately, what others have only tried, more or less well, to do. When, in the past at least, the critics objected to the realism of his imitative effects, they forgot that all other composers, at one time or another, had tried to be just as imitative, but had not succeeded so well in their imitations. Wagner, in his painting, is the Turner of music. He brings us nature, heroically exalted, full of fiery splendour, but nature as if caught in a mirror, not arranged, subdued, composed, for the frame of a picture. He is afraid of no realism, however mean, because he has confidence in nature as it is, apprehended with all the clairvoyance of emotion.

Between the abyss of the music, out of which the world rises up with all its voices, and the rocks and clouds, in which the scenery carries us onward to the last horizon of the world, gods and men act out the brief human tragedy, as if on a narrow island in the midst of a great sea. A few steps this way or that will plunge them into darkness; the darkness awaits them, however they succeed or fail, whether they live nobly or ignobly, in the interval; but the interval absorbs them, as if it were to be eternity, and we see them rejoicing and suffering with an abandonment to the moment which intensifies the pathos of what we know is futile. Love, in Wagner, is so ecstatic and so terrible, because it must compass all its anguish and delight into an immortal moment, before which there is only a great darkness, and only a great darkness afterwards. Sorrow is so lofty and so consoling because it is no less conscious of its passing hour.

And meanwhile action is not everything, as it is for other makers of drama; is but one among many modes of the expression of life. Those long narratives, which some find so tedious, so undramatic, are part of Wagner's protest against the frequently false emphasis of action. In Wagner anticipation and memory are seen to be often equally intense with the instant of realization. Siegfried is living

with at least as powerful and significant a life when he lies under the trees listening to the song of the birds as when he is killing the dragon. And it is for this that the 'motives,' which are after all only the materializing of memory were created by Wagner. These motives, by which the true action of the drama expresses itself, are a symbol of the inner life, of its preponderance over outward event, and, in their guidance of the music, their indication of the real current of interest, have a spiritualizing effect upon both music and action, instead of, as was once thought, materalizing both.

Wagner's aim at expressing the soul of things is still further helped by his system of continuous, unresolved melody. The melody which circumscribes itself like Giotto's O is almost as tangible a thing as a statue; it has almost contour. But this melody afloat in the air, flying like a bird, without alighting for more than a moment's swaying poise, as the notes flit from strings to voice, and from voice to wood and wind, is more than a mere heightening of speech: it partakes of the nature of thought, but it is more than thought; it is the whole expression of the subconscious life, saying more of himself than any person of the drama has ever found in his own soul.

It is here that Wagner unites with the greatest

dramatists, and distinguishes himself from the contemporary heresy of Ibsen, whose only too probable people speak a language exactly on the level of their desks and their shop-counters. Except in the *Meistersinger*, all Wagner's personages are heroic, and for the most part those supreme sublimations of humanity, the people of legend, Tannhäuser, Tristan, Siegfried, Parsifal, have at once all that is in humanity and more than is in humanity. Their place in a national legend permits them, without disturbing our critical sense of the probability of things, a superhuman passion; for they are ideals, this of chivalry, that of love, this of the bravery, that of the purity, of youth. Yet Wagner employs infinite devices to give them more and more of verisimilitude; modulating song, for instance, into a kind of chant which we can almost take for actual speech. It is thus the more interesting to note the point to which realism conducts him, the limit at which it stops, his conception of a spiritual reality which begins where realism leaves off.

And, in his treatment of scenery also, we have to observe the admirable dexterity of his compromises. The supernatural is accepted frankly with almost the childish popular belief in a dragon rolling a loathly bulk painfully, and breathing smoke. But note that the dragon, when it is

thrown back into the pit, falls without sound; note that the combats are without the ghastly and foolish modern tricks of blood and disfigurement; note how the crowds pose as in a good picture, with slow gestures, and without intrusive individual pantomime. As I have said in speaking of *Parsifal*, there is one rhythm throughout; music, action, speech, all obey it. When Brünnhilde awakens after her long sleep, the music is an immense thanksgiving for light, and all her being finds expression in a great embracing movement towards the delight of day. Siegfried stands silent for I know not what space of time; and it is in silence always, with a wave-like or flame-like music surging about them, crying out of the depths for them, that all the lovers in Wagner love at first sight. Tristan, when he has drunk the potion; Siegmund, when Sieglinde gives him to drink; Siegfried, when Brünnhilde awakens to the world and to him: it is always in the silence of rapture that love is given and returned. And the gesture, subdued into a gravity almost sorrowful (as if love and the thought of death came always together, the thought of the only ending of a mortal eternity), renders the inmost meaning of the music as no Italian gesture, which is the vehemence of first thoughts and the excitement of the senses, could ever render it. That slow rhythm, which in

Wagner is like the rhythm of the world flowing onwards from its first breathing out of chaos, as we hear it in the opening notes of the *Ring*, seems to broaden outwards like ripples on an infinite sea, throughout the whole work of Wagner.

And now turn from this elemental music, in which the sense of all human things is expressed with the dignity of the elements themselves, to all other operatic music, in which, however noble the music as music (think of Gluck, of Mozart, of Beethoven!), it is for the most part fettered to a little accidental comedy or tragedy, in which two lovers are jealous, or someone is wrongly imprisoned, or a libertine seduces a few women. Here music is like a god speaking the language of savages, and lowering his supreme intellect to the level of their speech. The melodious voice remains, but the divine meaning has gone out of the words. Only in Wagner does God speak to men in his own language.

CONCLUSION

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Is it not part of the pedantry of letters to limit the word art, a little narrowly, to certain manifestations of the artistic spirit, or, at all events, to set up a comparative estimate of the values of the several arts, a little unnecessarily? Literature, painting, sculpture, music, these we admit as art, and the persons who work in them as artists; but dancing, for instance, in which the performer is at once creator and interpreter, and those methods of interpretation, such as the playing of musical instruments, or the conducting of an orchestra, or acting, have we scrupulously considered the degree to which these also are art, and their executants, in a strict sense, artists?

If we may be allowed to look upon art as something essentially independent of its material, however dependent upon its own material each art may be, in a secondary sense, it will scarcely be logical to contend that the motionless and permanent creation of the sculptor in marble is, as art, more perfect than the same sculptor's modelling in snow, which, motionless one moment, melts the next, or than the dancer's harmonious succession of movements which we have not even time to realize individually before one is succeeded by another, and the whole has vanished from before our eyes. Art is the creation of beauty in

form, visible or audible, and the artist is the creator of beauty in visible or audible form. But beauty is infinitely various, and as truly beauty in the voice of Sarah Bernhardt or the silence of Duse as in a face painted by Leonardo or a poem written by Blake. A dance, performed faultlessly and by a dancer of temperament, is as beautiful, in its own way, as a performance on the violin by Ysaye or the effect of an orchestra conducted by Richter. In each case the beauty is different, but, once we have really attained beauty, there can be no question of superiority. Beauty is always equally beautiful; the degrees exist only when we have not yet attained beauty.

And thus the old prejudice against the artist to whom interpretation in his own special form of creation is really based upon a misunderstanding. Take the art of music. Bach writes a composition for the violin: that composition exists, in the abstract, the moment it is written down upon paper, but, even to those trained musicians who are able to read it at sight, it exists in a state at best but half alive; to all the rest of the world it is silent. Ysaye plays it on his violin, and the thing begins to breathe, has found a voice perhaps more exquisite than the sound which Bach heard in his brain when he wrote down the notes. Take the instrument out of Ysaye's hands, and put it

into the hands of the first violin in the orchestra behind him; every note will be the same, the same general scheme of expression may be followed, but the thing that we shall hear will be another thing, just as Bach, perhaps, but, because Ysaye is wanting, not the work of art, the creation, to which we have just listened.

That such art should be fragile, evanescent, leaving only a memory which can never be realized again, is as pathetic and as natural as that a beautiful woman should die young. To the actor, the dancer, the same fate is reserved. They work for the instant, and for the memory of the living, with a supremely prodigal magnanimity. Old people tell us that they have seen Desclée, Taglioni; soon no one will be old enough to remember those great artists. Then, if their renown becomes a matter of charity, of credulity, if you will, it will be but equal with the renown of all those poets and painters who are only names to us, or whose masterpieces have perished.

Beauty is infinitely various, always equally beautiful, and can never be repeated. Gautier, in a famous poem, has wisely praised the artist who works in durable material:

Oui, l'œuvre sort plus belle
D'une forme au travail
Rebelle,
Vers, marbre, onyx, émail.

No, not more beautiful; only more lasting.

Tout passe. L'art robuste
Seul a l'éternité.
Le buste
Survit à la cité.

Well, after all, is there not, to one who regards it curiously, a certain selfishness, even, in this desire to perpetuate oneself or the work of one's hands; as the most austere saints have found selfishness at the root of the soul's too conscious, or too exclusive, longing after eternal life? To have created beauty for an instant is to have achieved an equal result in art with one who has created beauty which will last many thousands of years. Art is concerned only with accomplishment, not with duration. The rest is a question partly of vanity, partly of business. An artist to whom posterity means anything very definite, and to whom the admiration of those who will live after him can seem to promise much warmth in the grave, may indeed refuse to waste his time, as it seems to him, over temporary successes. Or he

may shrink from the continuing ardour of one to whom art has to be made over again with the same energy, the same sureness, every time that he acts on the stage or draws music out of his instrument. One may indeed be listless enough to prefer to have finished one's work, and to be able to point to it, as it stands on its pedestal, or comes to meet all the world, with the democratic freedom of the book. All that is a natural feeling in the artist, but it has nothing to do with art. Art has to do only with the creation of beauty, whether it be in words, or sounds, or colour, or outline, or rhythmical movement; and the man who writes music is no more truly an artist than the man who plays that music, the poet who composes rhythms in words no more truly an artist than the dancer who composes rhythms with the body, and the one is no more to be preferred to the other, than the painter is to be preferred to the sculptor, or the musician to the poet, in those forms of art which we have agreed to recognize as of equal value.

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1. CAN SUCH THINGS BE? A volume of Stories by Ambrose Bierce

¶ 'Bierce never wastes a word, never coins a too startling phrase; he secures his final effect, a cold thrill of fear, by a simple, yet subtle, realism. No anthology of short stories, limited to a score or so, would be complete without an example of his unique artistry.' *Morning Post*

2 THE BLACK DOG. A volume of Stories by A. E. Coppard

¶ 'Mr. Coppard is a born story-teller. The book is filled with a variety of delightful stuff: no one who is interested in good writing in general, and good short stories in particular, should miss it.' *Spectator*

3. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of a SUPER-TRAMP by W. H. Davies. With a preface by G. BERNARD SHAW

¶ Printed as it was written, it is worth reading for its literary style alone. The author tells us with inimitable quiet modesty of how he begged and stole his way across America and through England and Wales until his travelling days were cut short by losing his right foot while attempting to 'jump' a train.

4. BABBITT A Novel
by Sinclair Lewis

¶ 'One of the greatest novels I have read for a long time.' *H. G. Wells* '*Babbitt* is a triumph.' *Hugh Walpole* 'His work has that something extra, over and above, which makes the work of art, and it is signed in every line with the unique personality of the author.' *Rebecca West*

5. THE CRAFT OF FICTION
by Percy Lubbock

¶ 'No more substantial or more charming volume of criticism has been published in our time.' *Observer*
'To say that this is the best book on the subject is probably true; but it is more to the point to say that it is the only one.' *Times Literary Supplement*

6. EARLHAM
by Percy Lubbock

¶ 'The book seems too intimate to be reviewed. We want to be allowed to read it, and to dream over it, and keep silence about it. His judgment is perfect, his humour is true and ready; his touch light and prim; his prose is exact and clean and full of music.' *Times*

7. WIDE SEAS & MANY LANDS A Personal Narrative
by Arthur Mason.
With an Introduction by MAURICE BARING

¶ 'This is an extremely entertaining, and at the same time, moving book. We are in the presence of a born writer. We read with the same mixture of amazement and delight that fills us throughout a Conrad novel.' *New Statesman*

8. SELECTED PREJUDICES A book of Essays
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'He is exactly the kind of man we are needing, an iconoclast, a scoffer at ideals, a critic with whips and scorpions who does not hesitate to deal with literary, social and political humbugs in the one slashing fashion.' *English Review*

9. THE MIND IN THE MAKING An Essay
by James Harvey Robinson

¶ 'For me, I think James Harvey Robinson is going to be almost as important as was Huxley in my adolescence, and William James in later years. It is a cardinal book. I question whether in the long run people may not come to it, as making a new initiative into the world's thought and methods.' *From the Introduction by* H. G. WELLS

10. THE WAY OF ALL FLESH A Novel
by Samuel Butler

¶ 'It drives one almost to despair of English Literature when one sees so extraordinary a study of English life as Butler's posthumous *Way of All Flesh* making so little impression. Really, the English do not deserve to have great men.' *George Bernard Shaw*

11. EREWHON A Satire
by Samuel Butler

¶ 'To lash the age, to ridicule vain pretension, to expose hypocrisy, to deride humbug in education, politics and religion, are tasks beyond most men's powers; but occasionally, very occasionally, a bit of genuine satire secures for itself more than a passing nod of recognition. *Erewhon* is such a satire. . . . The best of its kind since *Gulliver's Travels*.' *Augustine Birrell*

12. EREWHON REVISITED A Satire
by Samuel Butler

¶ 'He waged a sleepless war with the mental torpor of the prosperous, complacent England around him; a Swift with the soul of music in him, and completely sane; a liberator of humanity operating with the wit and malice and coolness of Mephistopheles.' *Manchester Guardian*

13. ADAM AND EVE AND PINCH ME Stories
by A. E. Coppard

¶ Mr. Coppard's implicit theme is the closeness of the spiritual world to the material; the strange, communicative sympathy which strikes through two temperaments and suddenly makes them one. He deals with those sudden impulses under which secrecy is broken down for a moment, and personality revealed as under a flash of spiritual lightning.

14. DUBLINERS A volume of Stories
by James Joyce

¶ A collection of fifteen short stories by the author of *Ulysses*. They are all of them brave, relentless, and sympathetic pictures of Dublin life; realistic, perhaps, but not crude; analytical, but not repugnant. No modern writer has greater significance than Mr. Joyce, whose conception and practice of the short story is certainly unique and certainly vital.

15. DOG AND DUCK
by Arthur Machen

¶ 'As a literary artist, Mr. Arthur Machen has few living equals, and that is very far indeed from being his only, or even his greatest, claim on the suffrages of English readers.' *Sunday Times*

16. KAI LUNG'S GOLDEN HOURS
by Ernest Bramah

¶ 'It is worthy of its forerunner. There is the same plan, exactitude, working-out and achievement; and therefore complete satisfaction in the reading.' *From the Preface by* HILAIRE BELLOC

17. ANGELS & MINISTERS, AND OTHER PLAYS
by Laurence Housman

Imaginary portraits of political characters done in dialogue—Queen Victoria, Disraeli, Gladstone, Parnell, Joseph Chamberlain, and Woodrow Wilson.

¶ 'It is all so good that one is tempted to congratulate Mr. Housman on a true masterpiece.' *Times*

18. THE WALLET OF KAI LUNG
by Ernest Bramah

¶ 'Something worth doing and done. . . . It was a thing intended, wrought out, completed and established. Therefore it was destined to endure, and, what is more important, it was a success.' *Hilaire Belloc*

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19. TWILIGHT IN ITALY
by D. H. Lawrence

¶ This volume of travel vignettes in North Italy was first published in 1916. Since then Mr. Lawrence has increased the number of his admirers year by year. In *Twilight in Italy* they will find all the freshness and vigour of outlook which they have come to expect from its author.

20. THE DREAM A Novel
by H. G. Wells

¶ 'It is the richest, most generous and absorbing thing that Mr. Wells has given us for years and years.' *Daily News*

'I find this book as close to being magnificent as any book that I have ever read. It is full of inspiration and life.' *Daily Graphic*

21. ROMAN PICTURES
by Percy Lubbock

¶ Pictures of life as it is lived—or has been or might be lived—among the pilgrims and colonists in Rome of more or less English speech.

'A book of whimsical originality and exquisite workmanship, and worthy of one of the best prose writers of our time.' *Sunday Times*

22. CLORINDA WALKS IN HEAVEN
by A. E. Coppard

¶ 'Genius is a hard-ridden word, and has been put by critics at many puny ditches, but Mr. Coppard sets up a fence worthy of its mettle. He shows that in hands like his the English language is as alive as ever, and that there are still infinite possibilities in the short story.' *Outlook*

23. MARIUS THE EPICUREAN
by Walter Pater

¶ Walter Pater was at the same time a scholar of wide sympathies and a master of the English language. In this, his best known work, he describes with rare delicacy of feeling and insight the religious and philosophic tendencies of the Roman Empire at the time of Antoninus Pius as they affected the mind and life of the story's hero.

24. THE WHITE SHIP Stories
by Aino Kallas
With an Introduction by JOHN GALSWORTHY

¶ 'The writer has an extraordinary sense of atmosphere.'
Times Literary Supplement

'Stories told convincingly and well, with a keen perception for natural beauty.' *Nation*

25. MULTITUDE AND SOLITUDE A Novel
by John Masefield

¶ 'As well conceived and done, as rich in observation of the world, as profound where it needs to be profound, as any novel of recent writing.' *Outlook*

'This is no common book. It is a book which not merely touches vital things. It is vital.' *Daily News*

26. SPRING SOWING Stories
by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ 'Nothing seems to escape Mr. O'Flaherty's eye; his brain turns all things to drama; and his vocabulary is like a river in spate. *Spring Sowing* is a book to buy, or to borrow, or, yes, to steal.' *Bookman*

27. WILLIAM A Novel
by E. H. Young

¶ 'An extraordinary good book, penetrating and beautiful.'
Allan Monkhouse

'All its characters are very real and alive, and William himself is a masterpiece.' *May Sinclair*

28. THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FIRS
by Sarah Orne Jewett

¶ 'The young student of American literature in the far distant future will take up this book and say "a masterpiece!" as proudly as if he had made it. It will be a message in a universal language—the one message that even the scythe of Time spares.'
From the Preface by WILLA CATHER

29. GRECIAN ITALY
by Henry James Forman

¶ 'It has been said that if you were shown Taormina in a vision you would not believe it. If the reader has been in Grecian Italy before he reads this book, the magic of its pages will revive old memories and induce a severe attack of nostalgia.' *From the Preface by* H. FESTING JONES

30. WUTHERING HEIGHTS
by Emily Brontë

¶ 'It is a very great book. You may read this grim story of lost and thwarted human creatures on a moor at any age and come under its sway.' *From the Introduction by* ROSE MACAULAY

31. ON A CHINESE SCREEN
by W. Somerset Maugham

¶ A collection of sketches of life in China. Mr. Somerset Maugham writes with equal certainty and vigour whether his characters are Chinese or European. There is a tenderness and humour about the whole book which makes the reader turn eagerly to the next page for more.

32. A FARMER'S LIFE
by George Bourne

¶ The life story of a tenant-farmer of fifty years ago in which the author of *The Bettesworth Book* and *The Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* draws on his memory for a picture of the every-day life of his immediate forebears, the Smiths, farmers and handicraft men, who lived and died on the border of Surrey and Hampshire.

33. TWO PLAYS. *The Cherry Orchard & The Sea Gull* by Anton Tchekoff. Translated by George Calderon

¶ Tchekoff had that fine comedic spirit which relishes the incongruity between the actual disorder of the world with the underlying order. He habitually mingled tragedy (which is life seen close at hand) with comedy (which is life seen at a distance). His plays are tragedies with the texture of comedy.

34. THE MONK AND THE HANGMAN'S DAUGHTER
by Ambrose Bierce

¶ 'They are stories which the discerning are certain to welcome. They are evidence of very unusual powers, and when once they have been read the reader will feel himself impelled to dig out more from the same pen.' *Westminster Gazette*

35. CAPTAIN MARGARET A Novel
by John Masefield

¶ 'His style is crisp, curt and vigorous. He has the Stevensonian sea-swagger, the Stevensonian sense of beauty and poetic spirit. Mr. Masefield's descriptions ring true and his characters carry conviction.' *The Observer*

36. BLUE WATER
by Arthur Sturges Hildebrand

¶ This book gives the real feeling of life on a small cruising yacht; the nights on deck with the sails against the sky, long fights with head winds by mountainous coasts to safety in forlorn little island ports, and constant adventure free from care.

37. STORIES FROM DE MAUPASSANT
Translated by Elizabeth Martindale

¶ 'His "story" engrosses the non-critical, it holds the critical too at the first reading. . . . That is the real test of art, and it is because of the inobtrusiveness of this workmanship, that for once the critic and the reader may join hands without awaiting the verdict of posterity.' *From the Introduction by* FORD MADOX FORD

38. WHILE THE BILLY BOILS First Series
by Henry Lawson

¶ These stories are written by the O. Henry of Australia. They tell of men and dogs, of cities and plains, of gullies and ridges, of sorrow and happiness, and of the fundamental goodness that is hidden in the most unpromising of human soil.

39. WHILE THE BILLY BOILS Second Series
by Henry Lawson

¶ Mr. Lawson has the uncanny knack of making the people he writes about almost violently alive. Whether he tells of jackeroos, bush children or drovers' wives, each one lingers in the memory long after we have closed the book.

41. IN MOROCCO
by Edith Wharton

¶ Morocco is a land of mists and mysteries, of trailing silver veils through which minarets, mighty towers, hot palm groves and Atlas snows peer and disappear at the will of the Atlantic cloud-drifts.

42. GLEANINGS IN BUDDHA-FIELDS
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ A book which is readable from first page to last, and is full of suggestive thought, the essays on Japanese religious belief calling for special praise for the earnest spirit in which the subject is approached.

43. OUT OF THE EAST
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Mr. Hearn has written many books about Japan ; he is saturated with the essence of its beauty, and in this book the light and colour and movement of that land drips from his pen in every delicately conceived and finely written sentence.

44. KWAIDAN
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ The marvellous tales which Mr. Hearn has told in this volume illustrate the wonder-living tendency of the Japanese. The stories are of goblins, fairies and sprites, with here and there an adventure into the field of unveiled supernaturalism.

45. THE CONQUERED
by Naomi Mitchison
A story of the Gauls under Cæsar

¶ 'With *The Conquered* Mrs. Mitchison establishes herself as the best, if not the only, English historical novelist now writing. It seems to me in many respects the most attractive and poignant historical novel I have ever read.' *New Statesman*

46. WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS
by Naomi Mitchison

Stories of the time when Rome was crumbling to ruin

¶ 'Interesting, delightful, and fresh as morning dew. The connoisseur in short stories will turn to some pages in this volume again and again with renewed relish.' *Times Literary Supplement*

47. THE FLYING BO'SUN
by Arthur Mason

¶ 'What makes the book remarkable is the imaginative power which has re-created these events so vividly that even the supernatural ones come with the shock and the conviction with which actual supernatural events might come.' *From the Introduction by* EDWIN MUIR

48. LATER DAYS
by W. H. Davies

A pendant to *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*

¶ 'The self-portrait is given with disarming, mysterious, and baffling directness, and the writing has the same disarmingness and simpleness.' *Observer*

49. THE EYES OF THE PANTHER Stories
by Ambrose Bierce

¶ It is said that these tales were originally rejected by virtually every publisher in the country. Bierce was a strange man; in 1914 at the age of seventy-one he set out for Mexico and has never been heard of since. His stories are as strange as his life, but this volume shows him as a master of his art.

50. IN DEFENCE OF WOMEN
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'All I design by the book is to set down in more or less plain form certain ideas that practically every civilized man and woman holds *in petto*, but that have been concealed hitherto by the vast mass of sentimentalities swathing the whole woman question.' *From the Author's Introduction*

51. VIENNESE MEDLEY A Novel
by Edith O'Shaughnessy

¶ 'It is told with infinite tenderness, with many touches of grave or poignant humour, in a very beautiful book, which no lover of fiction should allow to pass unread. A book which sets its writer definitely in the first rank of living English novelists.'
Sunday Times

52. PRECIOUS BANE A Novel
by Mary Webb

¶ 'She has a style of exquisite beauty; which yet has both force and restraint, simplicity and subtlety; she has fancy and wit, delicious humour and pathos. She sees and knows men aright as no other novelist does. She has, in short, genius.' *Mr. Edwin Pugh*

53. THE INFAMOUS JOHN FRIEND
by Mrs. R. S. Garnett

¶ This book, though in form an historical novel, claims to rank as a psychological study. It is an attempt to depict a character which, though destitute of the common virtues of every-day life, is gifted with qualities that compel love and admiration.

54. HORSES AND MEN
by Sherwood Anderson

¶ '*Horses and Men* confirms our indebtedness to the publishers who are introducing his work here. It has a unity beyond that of its constant Middle-west setting. A man of poetic vision, with an intimate knowledge of particular conditions of life, here looks out upon a world that seems singularly material only because he unflinchingly accepts its actualities.' *Morning Post*

55. SELECTED ESSAYS
by Samuel Butler

¶ This volume contains the following essays:

The Humour of Homer
Quis Desiderio . . .?
Ramblings in Cheapside
The Aunt, the Nieces, and the Dog
How to Make the Best of Life
The Sanctuary of Montrigone
A Medieval Girls' School
Art in the Valley of Saas
Thought and Language

56. A POET'S PILGRIMAGE
by W. H. Davies

¶ *A Poet's Pilgrimage* recounts the author's impressions of his native Wales on his return after many years' absence. He tells of a walking tour during which he stayed in cheap rooms and ate in the small wayside inns. The result is a vivid picture of the Welsh people, the towns and countryside.

57. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. First Series
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Most books written about Japan have been superficial sketches of a passing traveller. Of the inner life of the Japanese we know practically nothing, their religion, superstitions, ways of thought. Lafcadio Hearn reveals something of the people and their customs as they are.

58. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. Second Series
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Sketches by an acute observer and a master of English prose, of a Nation in transition—of the lingering remains of Old Japan, to-day only a memory, of its gardens, its beliefs, customs, gods and devils, of its wonderful kindliness and charm—and of the New Japan, struggling against odds towards new ideals.

59. THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO
Edited by Manuel Komroff

¶ When Marco Polo arrived at the court of the Great Khan, Pekin had just been rebuilt. Kublai Khan was at the height of his glory. Polo rose rapidly in favour and became governor of an important district. In this way he gained first-hand knowledge of a great civilization and described it with astounding accuracy and detail.

60. SELECTED PREJUDICES. Second Series
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'What a master of the straight left in appreciation! Everybody who wishes to see how common sense about books and authors can be made exhilarating should acquire this delightful book.'
Morning Post

61. THE WORLD'S BACK DOORS
by Max Murray
With an introduction by HECTOR BOLITHO

¶ This book is not an account so much of places as of people. The journey round the world was begun with about enough money to buy one meal, and continued for 66,000 miles. There are periods as a longshore man and as a sailor, and a Chinese guard and a night watchman, and as a hobo.

62. THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL
by J. Middleton Murry

¶ These essays were written during and immediately after the Great War. The author says that they record the painful stages by which he passed from the so-called intellectual state to the state of being what he now considers to be a reasonable man.

63. THE RENAISSANCE
by Walter Pater

¶ This English classic contains studies of those 'supreme artists,' Michelangelo and Da Vinci, and of Botticelli, Della Robia, Mirandola, and others, who 'have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere.' There is no romance or subtlety in the work of these masters too fine for Pater to distinguish in superb English.

64. THE ADVENTURES OF A WANDERER
by Sydney Walter Powell

¶ Throwing up a position in the Civil Service in Natal because he preferred movement and freedom to monotony and security, the author started his wanderings by enlisting in an Indian Ambulance Corps in the South African War. Afterwards he wandered all over the world.

65. 'RACUNDRA'S' FIRST CRUISE
by Arthur Ransome

¶ This is the story of the building of an ideal yacht which would be a cruising boat that one man could manage if need be, but on which three people could live comfortably. The adventures of the cruise are skilfully and vividly told.

66. THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN
by Winwood Reade

¶ 'Few sketches of universal history by one single author have been written. One book that has influenced me very strongly is *The Martyrdom of Man*. This "dates," as people say, nowadays, and it has a fine gloom of its own; but it is still an extraordinarily inspiring presentation of human history as one consistent process.' *H. G. Wells* in *The Outline of History*.

67. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD
With an introduction by H. W. MASSINGHAM

¶ Because of its honesty, delicacy and simplicity of portraiture, this book has always had a curious grip upon the affections of its readers. An English Amiel, inheriting to his comfort an English Old Crome landscape, he freed and strengthened his own spirit as he will his reader's.

68. THE DELIVERANCE
by Mark Rutherford

¶ Once read, Hale White [Mark Rutherford] is never forgotten. But he is not yet approached through the highways of English letters. To the lover of his work, nothing can be more attractive than the pure and serene atmosphere of thought in which his art moves.

69. THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE
by Mark Rutherford

¶ 'Since Bunyan, English Puritanism has produced one imaginative genius of the highest order. To my mind, our fiction contains no more perfectly drawn pictures of English life in its recurring emotional contrast of excitement and repose more valuable to the historian, or more stimulating to the imaginative reader.' *H. W. Massingham*

70. ASPECTS OF SCIENCE. First Series
by J. W. N. Sullivan

¶ Although they deal with different aspects of various scientific ideas, the papers which make up this volume do illustrate, more or less, one point of view. This book tries to show one or two of the many reasons why science may be interesting for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are.

71. MASTRO-DON GESUALDO
Giovanni Verga. Translated by D. H. Lawrence

¶ Verga, who died in 1922, is recognized as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. He can claim a place beside Hardy and the Russians. 'It is a fine full tale, a fine, full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

72. THE MISSES MALLETT
by E. H. Young

¶ The virtue of this quiet and accomplished piece of writing lies in its quality and in its character-drawing; to summarize it would be to give no idea of its charm. Neither realism nor romance, it is a book by a writer of insight and sensibility.

73. SELECTED ESSAYS. First Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ 'The prose of Sir Edmund Gosse is as rich in the colour of young imagination as in the mellow harmony of judgment. Sir Edmund Gosse's literary kit-kats will continue to be read with avidity long after the greater part of the academic criticism of the century is swept away upon the lumber-heap.' *Daily Telegraph*

74. WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS
by Christopher Morley

¶ A delicious satirical fantasy, in which humanity wears a dog-collar.

'Mr. Morley is a master of consequent inconsequence. His humour and irony are excellent, and his satire is only the more salient for the delicate and ingenuous fantasy in which it is set.' *Manchester Guardian*

75. JAVA HEAD
by Joseph Hergesheimer

¶ The author has created a connoisseur's world of his own; a world of colourful bric-à-brac—of ships and rustling silks and old New England houses—a world in which the rarest and most perplexing of emotions are caught and expressed for the perceptible moment as in austerely delicate porcelain. *Java Head* is a novel of grave and lasting beauty.

76. CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN
by George Moore

¶ 'Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.' *Humbert Wolfe*

77. THE BAZAAR. Stories
by Martin Armstrong

¶ 'These stories have considerable range of subject, but in general they are stay-at-home tales, depicting cloistered lives and delicate finely fibred minds. . . . Mr. Armstrong writes beautifully.' *Nation and Athenæum*

78. SIDE SHOWS. Essays
by J. B. Atkins
With an Introduction by JAMES BONE

¶ Mr. J. B. Atkins was war correspondent in four wars, the London editor of a great English paper, then Paris correspondent of another, and latterly the editor of the *Spectator*. His subjects in *Side Shows* are briefly London and the sea.

79. SHORT TALKS WITH THE DEAD
by Hilaire Belloc

¶ In these essays Mr. Belloc attains his usual high level of pungent and witty writing. The subjects vary widely and include an imaginary talk with the spirits of Charles I, the barber of Louis XIV, and Napoleon, Venice, fakes, eclipses, Byron and the famous dissertation on the Nordic Man.

80. ORIENT EXPRESS
by John dos Passos

¶ This book will be read because, as well as being the temperature chart of an unfortunate sufferer from the travelling disease, it deals with places shaken by the heavy footsteps of History, manifesting itself as usual by plague, famine, murder, sudden death and depreciated currency. Underneath the book is an ode to railroad travel.

81. SELECTED ESSAYS. Second Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him to write with equal charm on *Wycherley* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

82. ON THE EVE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

83. FATHERS AND CHILDREN
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ 'As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realized in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*.

84. SMOKE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

85. PORGY. A Tale
by du Bose Heyward

¶ This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy. The author's description of a hurricane is reminiscent in its power.

86. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH
by Sisley Huddleston

¶ 'There has been nothing of its kind published since the War. His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopædia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

88. CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta
by Naomi Mitchison

¶ 'Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

89. A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS
by Stephen Graham

¶ In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

90. THUNDER ON THE LEFT
by Christopher Morley

¶ 'It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' *Hugh Walpole*

91. THE MOON AND SIXPENCE
by Somerset Maugham

¶ A remarkable picture of a genius.
'Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

92. THE CASUARINA TREE
by W. Somerset Maugham

¶ Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. Mr. Maugham remains cruelly aloof from his characters. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

93. A POOR MAN'S HOUSE
by Stephen Reynolds

¶ Vivid and intimate pictures of a Devonshire fisherman's life. 'Compact, harmonious, without a single—I won't say false—but uncertain note, true in aim, sentiment and expression, precise and imaginative, never precious, but containing here and there an absolutely priceless phrase. . . .' *Joseph Conrad*

94. WILLIAM BLAKE
by Arthur Symons

¶ When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly re-making it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons' work.

95. A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND
by Edward Thomas

¶ A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc. Each chapter is a miniature biography and at the same time a picture of the man and his work and environment.

96. NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE
by The Earl of Rosebery

¶ Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end, but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

97. THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR
Compiled by Edward Thomas

¶ This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

98. SAFETY PINS: ESSAYS
by Christopher Morley
With an Introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON

¶ Very many readers will be glad of the opportunity to meet Mr. Morley in the rôle of the gentle essayist. He is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought

99. THE BLACK SOUL: A Novel
by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ '*The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm. . . . Nothing like it has been written by any Irish writer.' "Æ" in *The Irish Statesman*

100. CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER: A Novel
by H. G. Wells

¶ At first reading the book is utterly beyond criticism; all the characters are delightfully genuine.' *Spectator*
'Brimming over with Wellsian insight, humour and invention. No one but Mr. Wells could have written the whole book and given it such verve and sparkle.' *Westminster Gazette*

101. THE INTIMATE JOURNALS OF PAUL GAUGUIN
Translated by Van Wyck Brooks

¶ The confessions of genius are usually startling; and Gauguin's *Journals*, now made accessible to the wider world, are no exception. He exults in his power to give free rein to his savage spirit, tearing the shawl from convention's shoulders with a gesture as unscrupulous as it is Rabelaisian.

102. THE GRUB STREET NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS
by J. C. Squire

¶ Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature. From *The Man Who Kept a Diary* to *The Man Who Wrote Free Verse*, these tales constitute Mr. Squire's most delightful ventures in fiction; and the conception of the book itself is unique.

103. ORIENTAL ENCOUNTERS
by Marmaduke Pickthall

¶ In *Oriental Encounters*, Mr. Pickthall relives his earlier manhood's discovery of Arabia and sympathetic encounters with the Eastern mind. He is one of the few travellers who really bridges the racial gulf. His book is simple in its substance and intimate in its statement, bringing us close to the author and to his experience.

104. CYRANO DE BERGERAC
by Edmond Rostand
Translated by Gladys Thomas and Mary Guillemard

¶ Certain characters there are in life and literature who achieve our undying regard; and in this noble company of Sancho Panzas and D'Artagnans, Cyrano is ever eminent. The play itself is Rostand's masterpiece, and is indeed the *chef-d'œuvre* of the French Romantic Movement.

'Rumour has in no way exaggerated its extraordinary brilliance. The translation is a remarkably able piece of work.' *William Archer.*

105. THE MOTHER: A Novel
by Grazia Deledda
With an introduction by D. H. LAWRENCE

¶ An unusual book, both in its story and its setting in a remote Sardinian hill village, half civilized and superstitious. The action of the story takes place so rapidly (all within the space of two days) and the actual drama is so interwoven with the mental conflict, and all so forced by circumstances, that it is almost Greek in its simple and inevitable tragedy.

106. TRAVELLER'S JOY : An Anthology
by W. G. Waters

¶ This anthology has been selected for publication in the Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

107. SHIPMATES : Essays
by Felix Riesenberg

¶ A collection of intimate character portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters. The essays have the feeling of the sea in them ; they also have something of its romance.

★

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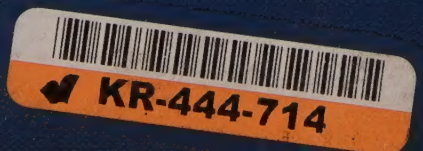
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